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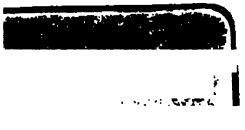

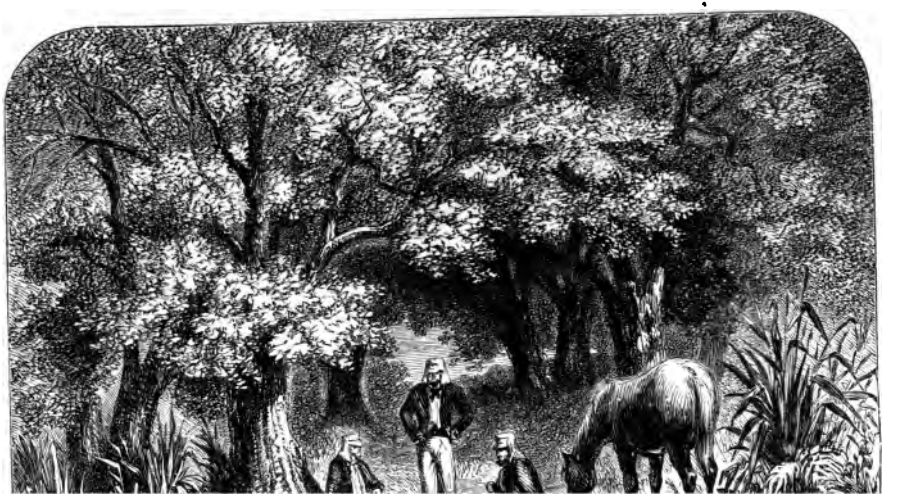

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WOUNDED OFFICER.

IN TWO [illegible]

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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1858.

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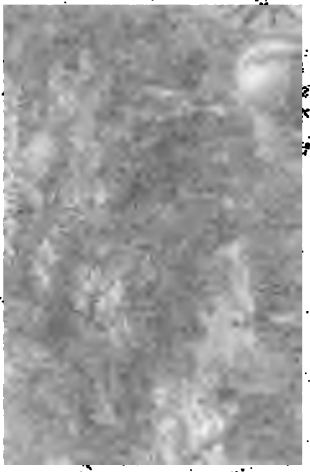

MY ESCAPE

FROM

THE MUTINIES IN OUDH.

BY

A WOUNDED OFFICER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1858.

249. c. 366.

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"Is Henry allowed as much as he used to have?" I inquired.

"Yes," said Jane; "and gets more, for we are often pinched at home on his account. Papa is afraid of getting into debt, so whenever Henry leaves, the screw is put on, and you cannot imagine how close we live."

"Then I suppose," I said, "this gallant Major was the cause of my never getting more than five pound notes when I was so hard up in India and wrote home for assistance."

"No," said Ella, "papa used to say your pay was splendid, and that if he gave you money it would only make you extravagant."

"The old story, Ella," I said; "splendid pay and nothing to spend it on, everything very cheap, with

a good climate enough. Oh! how I do wish the people at home would give over that idea of Indian pay. We, in India, are perfectly willing to undergo ill health and every discomfort; but it sours a man to know that whilst he is working heaven and earth to avoid debt, stinting himself of everything that can be construed into a luxury, even drinking warmish water night after night at mess, so as to keep the bill low, or living in a tent until the heat in it is no longer bearable, so that the money saved in house rent may help to pay his dak or transit from the stifling plains to the long recommended Hills. It sours a man, I say, doing all this, and ten times more to know that all these at home imagine he is revelling in luxuries, and that the debt contracted is the result of his own folly."

"Is it not so?" asked Jane; "I have been told that the officers there get very large pay, and that being in debt is their own faults. Indeed, I have heard old Davis tell papa, that when he was India none but the extravagant and wild ones got into debt. I believe you would have had more, but Davis used to say, that as Adjutant of your regiment you ought not to owe money, but have saved some."

"Rather impertinent of Davis interfering," I said. "But I suppose the governor consulted him. India was different in his days, when officers both civil and military had lots of opportunity of making money. Presents and perquisites are now, thank heaven!

disallowed. Besides, we were not then always extending our frontier, and thus causing our officers to be always building houses, these to be left to fall down when built, as the site for cantonments turns out to be not sufficiently high, or swampy ground near makes it unhealthy. Where are officers to find two or three hundred pounds to build a house, except at ruinous interest from the bank? Then it is no joke continually keeping up carriage for moving on service, buying horses that will die, and last though not least purchasing steps."

"But why do you purchase steps?" asked Jane.

"Because one would never get promoted without. Why I should now be but last lieutenant if we had never bought men out. People now a days instead of remaining in the country until they die, go up to the Hills, or are glad to get a bonus to add to their pensions, and live on a little in England. This they could not do if a purse was not made for them, and they would remain in the regiment, useless men to the government, and a dead lock to the promotion of those below them."

"But suppose those below cannot pay," said Ella.

"Why then probably the poor fellow, though entitled to a small pension is unable to retire, so hangs on in the service, continually going up to the Hills, and always ill. As a captain, remember the

pension after deducting funds is but about £170 a year, and this after twenty years' service in India."

"But he may have saved money," said Jane.

"This I defy," I answered; "for a man to do now a days on his mere regimental pay. I do not think any man can save sufficient money to live at home on in twenty years, without he either has had a good appointment, or else has dirtied his fingers abominably."

"How do you mean?" said Ella.

"Why bribes are known, and such things as commissariat pickings do exist."

"Commissariat pickings, what's that?" asked Ella.

"Very neat things, according to all accounts I have heard. Contracts to supply soldiers with meat, blankets, tea, wines, physics, and everything are made there; and the officer consenting to the contract, may take perhaps the cheapest or dearest, according as the contractor buys a few houses or horses from him at fabulous prices."

"But gentlemen would not be bribed," added Jane.

"Don't know," I replied. "Never was tried, but have heard of officers, civil and military, getting suddenly wonderfully rich, and well to do in the world. Their bankers' accounts changing from debtor to creditor quite miraculously."

"Then they must cheat," said Ella.

"Something very like it, my dear, only it is dangerous to say so, when it cannot be quite proved. However, now-a-days, this is the only way for men in India to make a rapid fortune; excepting, of course, by trade, about which I know nothing," and shutting the hall door, we parted to dress for dinner.

It was miserable work the end of autumn, howling and wet outside, and yet inside after four o'clock too light to order candles, and with their aid to set about doing something. We usually passed this time over the drawing-room fire, listening at the pitter-patter of the cold rain as it was driven against the window pane, and in talking over the past. My mother and father seldom left the dining-room, and Henry had not yet come back to make "head-quarters" uncomfortable. At first the nasty drizzling of November tried my wounded arm, but when this gave way to bright winter, few enjoyed a hearty gallop over the flat, or was oftener in the preserves than myself.

The people round had all shewn their respect for my parents by calling, and numerous were the invitations to dinner. These I often refused, frequently to avoid meeting Mr. Jones, the member, who now made a point of being rude to me, and sometimes because I was not inclined to ride home eight miles on a dreary winter's night over Welsh roads, winding and hilly.

Once at a gentleman's party—at which we had been kept waiting somewhat longer for dinner to be announced, than is comfortable, owing to the late arrival of some rich country magnate, who thought he shewed his breeding by coming nearly an hour after time—I was addressed by Mr. Jones, who was also of the party, looking redder and more ill-tempered than usual through the delay.

"Ah, Captain Villars, you here. How are you?" said the disagreeable voice.

"Very well, thank you," said I, in a voice intended to be just distantly civil.

"Not going back to India, hey?" said the member, "you look well enough."

"I may; but I do not yet return to India," I replied. "I am only just home."

"Home, sweet home, hey! find this better than working out in India, hey?" and he winked in a manner meant to be facetious.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Jones. Your remarks are rude, and let me add most disagreeable, so I should feel obliged by your not addressing me for the future," I replied, stepping towards him.

"Hoity toity, young gentleman. Spirit you call that, don't you in the army?" said he with a sneer.

"I requested you not to address me, Sir," was my rejoinder.

"Certainly not," said he so loudly that all could hear. This added to my heightened colour shewed

that a row had taken place, so immediately a pleasing dead silence set in, which continued until dinner was announced.

"What did that vulgar brute say to you?" said my father as we rode home together.

"Nothing over particular, much the same as when I met him at Davis's, which was, I am getting others to do my duty, and am no longer sick."

"I only wish he had lost his arm instead of you, and had gout in every corner of his carcase," said the Major kicking his horse.

"The fellow does annoy me, I own; but I wish he could be ill, then he would know how to pity those who are," I replied.

"Be ill," said the Major. "I wish you were strong enough to give him a hiding; but the fellow is like all that collier lot, as strong as a horse, and as vicious as a mule."

"Why, father," I said, "in England you can't kick a fellow without being sent for six months to work off your anger in the county goal; and there they cut your hair Newgate fashion, so that your friends are chary of your acquaintance until it grows again."

"Sometimes you may thrash a man," he replied. "But with my brother magistrates here, you would most certainly have a turn at the mill."

"Then not to try, and also not to have the tables turned by finding Jones thrashing me, instead of me

thrashing him; I shall leave him alone, and cut his acquaintance," I said.

"But he won't be cut. In the Peninsula that fellow would be called out and shot like a thrush."

"Aye," I replied, "but this is not the Peninsula. Moreover, Jones would not go out; and another thing, I would put up with any amount of insult rather than fight a duel. Nothing I truly believe in the way of injury, entitles you to take the life of a fellow creature. The idea of doing so, has to me something horrible in it."

"Right, my son," said the old campaigner, "I never fought one, and not doing so in my days was thought much more of than now. But are they not pretty common in India?"

"No, very seldom now. Sometimes you hear of such things, but they are generally fought by boys, who often do it for fear of being thought cowards. I have almost always found that the friends could make up the quarrel if they were in earnest, and chose to inform the principals that they would only befriend them as far as bringing round a reconciliation, and not accompany them to the field."

"But now a days," asked the Major, "a man can be tried by court-martial for fighting a duel?"

"Yes, I believe so," I replied, "as also for not doing so, which is often termed, not taking sufficient measures to clear his character."

"Then if a man calls you liar, blackguard, &c.,

are you to report the whole to the authorities, instead of kicking him and then telling?"

"Why as far as I know, you must report a row to the authorities, and leave them to deal with the aggressor."

"Well, then, I should make a mess of it, I'm sure," said the Major; "but I fancy all this has been considered by better heads than our's, and it somehow answers on the whole, for I think both military and civil are more civil than they used to be. However, somehow without duelling, they still manage in the army to knock snobbism out of a fellow, and this surprises me."

"Good night," said I, giving our horses over to the groom, and entering the hall.

"Good night, Philip," replied the old gentleman.

"I wonder if the army could knock the snobbishness out of Jones, because I very much doubt it. Good night."

Thus went by the winter, sometimes I went over to stay a short time with Davis, but seldom was long there; he was fond of seeing people, and often I was in such bad health from my wound, and ague, that the sight of strangers distressed me. About Christmas, we were at St. Helens honoured by a visit from Henry, who on seeing me, said in a very cool manner, "You're back, well I hope you are better now," but as he did not seem anxious for

an answer, I gave none, at the same time declining the offer of "a baccy."

Henry stayed about a month, making himself very disagreeable and quarrelling with us all. To me he was not decently civil, but told me plainly he hated me, and wished to Heaven I had stayed in India. During the month, I was a good deal over at Davis's estate, and would have stopped there altogether, but was asked not to do so by my sisters, who in me felt some protection from the rudeness of their coward brother.

Rainy, damp, and snowy winter at last gave way to spring, and I determined on going to Staffordshire and see the family of poor Douglas, giving them the testament made over to my charge on the field of Sobraon.

I therefore wrote to Mr. Douglas, stating how intimate I had been with his son, and asked if a visit from me would be acceptable. To this an answer was sent by return of post, and a few days after I was knocking at the door of the beautiful old vicarage, in the still more beautiful village of Glenmore.

Had they all been my own sisters, and Mr. and Mrs. Douglas my parents, a warmer reception could not have been given to me, I was at home in an instant with them, each appeared to vie with the other in making me feel at home. After the first

few moments of silence passed by all, caused by my mentioning the lost brother's name, we adjourned to the tea-table, spread on a table placed under a weeping ash. Here we sat until it became dark and cold, whilst I told them all I knew about the brave one now mouldering in the sands of the Sutlej.

The father was my beau ideal of a village clergyman, ever willing to help the poor and needy with money and advice, but stern and uncompromising to the dissolute, whether clothed in purple or rags. In listening to him on the Sabbath day, one heard not only the scholar, but gentleman. Nor did he try the patience of his hearers with long windy discourses on doctrine and ancient fathers, but told them their duty, and shewed how all he said might be performed, by the example of himself and family. Mrs. Douglas, kind, good woman, was as ever ready to make the invalid comfortable, or to help with advice the erring sister. Her daughters were handsome girls, and as good as handsome. The eldest I found engaged to the curate of another parish; their marriage was to come off when he got a living; so on this they lived, and fully trusting each other, talked over what they would do when they had a vicarage and parish of their own.

I stayed in the village for nearly a month, fishing all day, and generally spending my evenings at the Vicarage. Chess and the piano would pass away the evening; then a prayer from the good

man and I would return to my lodgings in the queer old village inn. Sometimes Mr. Lenon would drive over and spend a day or two, a bed being made up for him, in what was called "the spare room;" but with him, I conversed but little. He was reserved, and kept his affections for the family for whom he had done so much, leaving none for a mere friend of this family. I do not think he understood me, or particularly liked me; perhaps my way of speaking of some of the old gentlemen about St. Helens had annoyed him, or offended him. Any way he was distant, and I thought, as prejudiced as most of these island gentlemen, who seldom stir beyond it. However, he had done everything for Douglas and his family, and it was not for me to pick holes in his coat. Bright summer came at last; not, however, as I had been accustomed of late years to see it, with a hop, skip, and a jump; but with a tedious amount of cold rain, sleet, and damp sunshine. This changeable weather had told on me, I had been fishing daily, and at first thought it was but cold; however, not getting better, determined on quitting Staffordshire and paying a visit to the mother of my kind friend Morris, as I promised I would do when I bid him good-bye at Lahore.

Mrs. Morris was one of those good old ladies, who can suppose that things in these days, are as good, if not better, than they were in her's; and as such liked to obtain information on all subjects. Regard-

ing myself, her son had written over and over again; and my visit, though at times unlooked for, was not altogether unexpected. The old lady insisted on my having a room in the house, and added, as she "had no son in England, you must let me treat you as such, and see if our country air cannot restore you to health." I had nothing to tell her about her son, for she had heard much more recently from him; but still there was a pleasure in talking with one, who had seen and conversed with him. She lived but to once again see this son, and a tear dimmed her eye when I said that he often spoke to me of home, and hoped ere long to leave India for ever, and be able to live at peace with his fond mother.

I moved but little from the house, as I could not part with my cold, and pains caught at Glenmore. For days would my teeth chatter with ague, and my arm be so painful, that the slightest exertion was more than I could bear. Nothing could exceed the kindness of Mrs. Morris, all I wanted, and more was given me; still I did not get better, and I began to discover that I had exerted myself too much on first arrival; in fact, that six months of rain, sleet, and sunshine, had not eradicated seven years of heat, damp, and exposure.

As I did not get better, I resolved on returning home, for I felt that I required medical advice, and thought that none could be so kind as a mother and

sisters. Under these circumstances, greatly against her wish, I bid Mrs. Morris good-bye, and next day arrived at St. Helens, in a state of illness and fever, that left me for weeks unable to do anything for myself.

CHAPTER II.

During this time, nothing could exceed the kindness of my mother and sisters; each took it in turns to watch by my bed-side, and ever as I awoke, or recovered my wandering senses for a moment, would there be the willing hand, and kind voice, waiting to supply my wants. The long days of summer, seemed doubly long in that darkened chamber; sometimes, when but half sensible I imagined myself back in my tent in India, with the regimental surgeon again scolding Morris for talking to me. Gradually these visions departed, and I found myself slowly but surely improving. Now as the summer advanced, I was well enough, leaning on my father's arm, to totter to the sofa placed under the shade of the copper beech on the lawn, and here would the hours pass away; my sisters and a young lady, who was staying with them, bringing their work or reading aloud.

This young lady was none other than the daughter of the man I particularly disliked, Mr. Jones, the

county member. It appears that she and my sisters had been intimate for years, but that it was seldom they met; Amy Jones, having, until her seventeenth year, been brought up by an aunt in Cumberland, who received charge of her from the dying hands of Mrs. Jones some ten years previously. As Mr. Jones' occupations required much of his time to be spent in London, his daughter was accustomed to occasionally visit him there; and had sometimes, during the shooting season, accompanied the member to his large, but somewhat vulgar looking house and estate, at The Elms in Monmouthshire.

It was during one of these visits that the families met, and my sisters finding that between the new comer and themselves, there were many tastes and ideas in common, an intimacy immediately sprung up, and soon it was agreed that whenever Amy came to The Elms, she should always come over and pass a few days at St. Helens. Thus it was that I found Miss Jones a visitor at St. Helens, where it appeared she had been for many days, as on her father being summoned suddenly to town, she had come over to us, and could not be parted with by Jane and Ella, until the member's return caused the necessity.

She was an only daughter, and in most things could do very much as she liked. Her father made no secret to her of his dislike to "the proud fellow

of St. Helens;" but still, since it gratified her in going there, he was not the man likely to withhold his consent to her doing so. This time he was rather pleased than otherwise to leave her with some of her own sex, as he could not tell for how long a time the business in London might detain him. How far the member might have consented to this arrangement, had he known that I was there, I cannot say, as my coming home so suddenly was unknown to any in the neighbourhood; as it was, the sisters went over in the carriage to Chepstow to meet her, and Miss Jones was unaware of the interesting sick brother, until she was well on her way to St. Helens.

Miss Jones, I was at first prepared to dislike, as much from her name, (which I own I dislike,) as from her being the daughter of John Jones, M.P. for Monmouthshire. I felt annoyed with my sisters when they told me who our visitor was; and was resolved in my own mind to find Amy Jones ill looking, short, red faced, and as overbearing and obstinate as her father.

I was agreeably surprised on the first day that I managed to leave my dressing-room for the old copper beech, to find waiting to congratulate me on my improving strength, a tall, handsome, and most lady like girl, her manners winning and gentle in the extreme, and voice quiet and musical. Altogether Miss Jones looked so good, modest, and amiable,

that I felt ashamed of myself, for my unjust opinions. Of conversation we had little, as I felt unequal to it; but still by overhearing her remarks to Jane and Ella on passing events, I saw she was one with no common order of intellect.

"Well," said Ella, when I got back to my dressing room again. "What do you think of Amy?"

"Agreeably disappointed," I replied.

"Oh then, I suppose, you expected to see her red nosed, cross and ugly, in fact her father in female attire."

"I really think I did. But how long does she stay; can she draw, and does she sing?"

"One question at a time; I hope her father won't return yet a-while; she sings and draws well. So then when you are better, you shall see her perform. Why, I believe you are in love with her already."

"Desperately," I replied. "I am just the sort of person to be so, so likely to fall in love with a pretty face at first sight; more particularly with that snob Jones' daughter."

"Well, don't get angry, I was only laughing; but for all she is as you call her, 'that snob Jones' daughter,' she is as lady like and good a girl as any we know," replied Ella, somewhat vexed.

"But perhaps you don't know many lady like and good girls."

"As many, perhaps, as other people, without

going to Nainee Tal to discover them," said Ella, in a sort of quiet triumph.

"Bother you, good night, you impudent little animal," I said, as I shut her out.

Before long I was in bed, and in my first good, sound, and healthy sleep, forgot Ella, Amy, Jane, and even my old love at Nainee Tal.

Next day it rained, and so we were confined to the house and music. Amy, I found, did as Ella had told me, played and sang well, and before the day was out, we found so much in common to agree upon, and talk about, that I forgot the fine handsome girl sitting near my sofa, rejoiced in the uneuphonious name of Jones, and that the vulgar dog, Jones, was her father.

I was less willing to go to bed early that night than usual, and I really began to think that Ella had the previous night judged correctly, and that I was almost in love at first sight, and that with "the snob Jones' daughter." However, I was not going to own it or if possible let my sisters see it.

"Good night, Philip," said Jane, giving me her shoulder to lean on up the staircase. "Don't forget Miss what's-her-name at Nainee Tal."

"What should I remember her for?" I asked.

"Because you should; she was, you know, a nice girl and had a glorious old aunt."

"I know what you mean; you and Ella, I see, have made up your minds to fancy I have fallen in

love with your friend Miss Jones, when I can assure you, the thought has never entered into my head."

"Neither Ella nor myself have even spoken to each other on the subject; I only wish you and Amy would fall in love with each other, for Amy is just the wife to make a man happy."

"Oh, sisters," I said opening the door, "are always trying to get their brothers married; never thinking that their sweet amiable companions turn out very different, when made the brother's companion for life. I am not going to be married, or even think about it. When I get well, I shall run down to see my old friend, Giant, the Parson, as I have promised to do a dozen times since I returned home."

Each day I improved in strength, and was, before a week had expired from my first coming down, able to extend my rambles to the river's bank, and there with brush and board amuse myself in sketching the groups of tourists, boatmen and others, whose avocations led them up the Wye. Generally my sisters, with Miss Jones, accompanied me; the girls evidently still thinking that I was not strong enough to be trusted alone, and that to do so, would be the signal for my tumbling down some quarry or into the river.

Daily I felt more drawn to Amy, and none feared so much, on the letter bag being opened and the

letters being delivered, that one should be from "the snob Jones" calling upon her return to The Elms.

Day after day passed, and still no letter of recall. Several letters had been received from him, chiefly on business matters connected with his property, and all putting off his coming for an indefinite period, the business not yet being finished. The acquaintance begun under the old copper beech between Amy and myself had become an intimacy; and I felt that when she left St. Helens, there would be a blank in my days, which my sisters would be unable to fill. Both my sisters played and sang well, but so did other girls; none so well, however, as Amy, who, to me, sang *very well.*

At last the long expected letter came; and ordering the carriage, we all started for The Elms, meeting its owner looking dismal and discontented at the lodge gate.

As Amy determined on getting out here and walking with her father to the house, we all agreed to do the same; so giving the reins over to the groom, I descended from the box and returned the half civil bow of the member.

"Your friends must stay lunch," said Mr. Jones.

"I was inclined to demur in accepting the invitation; but on hearing Amy say to Jane, that "she hoped we would," and knowing that in giving an excuse Amy could tell that it was got up for the

occasion, I resolved to put a good face on the matter, and with all entered the house.

I give the credit, if any is due, to Mr. Jones for being as disagreeable in his own house as in those belonging to other people. He was by no means stingy, rather liberal than otherwise; but his manner of asking you to partake of anything, led you to suppose that he grudged it. The lunch was good, but owing to the known dislike of all the St. Helens' party to the donor, the time passed away slowly, and all seemed as stiff and formal as a funeral party.

There were several of those awkward pauses in which no one wishes to be the first to break the silence. In one of these Mr. Jones broke, by calling out rather loudly to me, that "if I was a specimen of the British army just now, they must be an expensive article."

"Mr. Jones," I replied, "I have been very ill, and would rather you should not be facetious at my expense."

"Hah, hah, hah!" laughed Jones. "You look precious bad indeed, worse than ever; what you came so far for to look so bad, I can't tell; should advise your going back to work again."

"Oh, papa," said Amy, "how can you say such an unkind thing to Mr. Villars, he has been dreadfully ill."

"Whew!" said the vulgar brute. "Is that it? and what do you know about it, pray, Miss?"

"Nothing, papa," said Amy blushing crimson.

"Then hold your tongue, and don't interfere."

"I beg your pardon," I said to Miss Jones, rising to go, "for having been the cause of this, I am sorry the unlucky subject was introduced; but now, farewell."

"Never knew you sorry for anything before," broke in old vulgarity.

"Good bye, Mr. Villars," said Amy. "I have to thank you and your family for many a pleasant day."

"Humph," said Jones, shaking hands with Ella, "glad your family pleased her, thank you. Good bye," and we drove homewards.

"Well," I said from the box, "I cannot make out how so nice a girl can have such a brute of a father. I never come near him, but what my fingers itch to thrash him."

"Nothing odd in that," said Ella. "People, of course, wonder how we are so nice, and you so particularly disagreeable. Don't you think Amy thinks so?"

"What do I know about what Amy thinks?"

"Of course not," said Ella, "and don't care, do you?"

"Hang this stumbling near horse," said I, in answer, as the brute nearly came on his head in the

rut. "Why doesn't the governor sell him for dog's meat."

"Don't get excited," said Ella, looking to Jane for support. "The governor, as you call him, is not inclined to turn Roland into dog's meat, because his son has bid farewell to his ladye love."

"Bother my ladye love! what stuff you talk, Ella; and you Jane are just as bad sitting there, quietly encouraging her."

"Bother your ladye love!" returned Jane, now fairly roused into supporting her sister. "Bother your ladye love; poor Amy, if she only knew how amiably you think of her."

"She neither thinks of me, nor I of her," I said sharply.

"If I am to judge by a certain young gentleman's way of going on, I should say he did not want his ladye love bothered," said Jane.

"Roland says to himself that something strange has come over the driver, as his back can testify," added Ella.

"I will upset the whole lot of you directly into the ditch," I said.

"Then it is just as well Amy is not with us," said Jane not at all alarmed.

"Now hold your tongues and don't bother me," I answered more civilly.

"Taking a leaf out of Mr. Jones' book, and telling ladies to hold their tongues," said Jane.

Seeing that I was no match for the two girls, I said no more; but vented my spite upon Roland until we arrived at the house, when I walked off to my room, and remained scribbling and thinking until dinner time.

So long as Miss Jones lived at The Elms, there were lots of messages and answers going between the two houses; more than once I had ridden over with these, risking the seeing Mr. Jones, rather than not have a few moments with her, I felt was now to me more than I thought a woman again could be. Frequently when I knew old Jones was at some public meeting would I ride out that way, and lucky man, not improbably find some means of seeing his daughter. The sisters quizzed on, but I was now not so ready to resent it, but felt gratified at hearing my name and Amy's coupled together. That Amy preferred me to many others I could see, and that she was pleased when I was pleased; but beyond this I could see nothing to suppose that she loved me. I tried hard to make out something approaching love in the words she had said to her father when she returned from St. Helens; but after turning them over and over, they seemed but very natural and common place, "Oh, papa, how can you say such an unkind thing to Mr. Villars." I would like to have asked Jane or Ella, but feared to do so, as in the first place they might know no more than myself, or perhaps chill my hopes, or having now

some certainty to go on, continue what they call "quizzing," but what I called "chaffing" to a point beyond endurance. My father and mother were no better. The mother was so pathetic over a love affair, as to be full of "poor fellows and dear girls," until the interested persons were married; and being pitied was not what I wanted. As to the father, he was as flinty as a stone on such subjects, considered that people should take wives only if they were well off; and then look about them, and choose much in the same way as in purchasing a horse. Never believed in hearts breaking or unselfish affection after twenty-two; and would wind up an argument on the absurdity of people being in a hurry to get married, by saying, "I was thirty before I committed the folly."

Under these circumstances I kept my ideas to myself, and let Miss Jones return with her father to London, without making her aware of the melancholy state of my affections.

Once or twice Henry came down, and was good enough to smoke the snails off the trees in the shrubbery, and to polish up his pipes in the drawing-room; but before him my sisters never mentioned the subject, so I was spared his sneers. As winter returned, so I took to shooting, and sometimes a turn with the hounds, when the meet was tolerably near; but I was too far gone, even to care for these things, and often have I turned round on the second

fox being drawn for; and to my horse's sorrow gone homewards, walking him at a snail's pace the whole way, and only awaking from my reverie by the turnpike-keeper demanding three pence.

Sometimes I had almost determined to write to Amy and settle the matter either one way or another, or perhaps, do so through Ella; but then I should be obliged to let Ella into the secret, and if the answer was unfavourable, then she would know it, and a new subject for chaffing would arise. Then I could not but see that Old Jones would never consent, that however much he loved his daughter, it was evident he did not love me, and being his only daughter, she would not like to leave him alone, and marry without his consent. Putting all together, affairs looked very complicated, and the conclusions were always the same.

CHAPTER III.

"I SHALL be off and see Elliot," I said, one frosty day to Jane.

"Why," asked she, "are you tired of us all; or do you take London in your road?"

"What a question, can't I go away from home for a week or so, without being tired; and the Lakes are not quite London road?"

"No, perhaps not, but I did not know where Mr. Elliot lived; it seemed but natural that you should go to London."

"Why natural?" I asked.

"Oh! you know, your world is there; is she not?"

"Why, Jane, do you ask; do you think I care for Amy?"

"Philip, dear," she replied, relinquishing the bantering tone, "you more than care for Amy, you cannot even keep your secret. Why do you not relieve your mind, and ask Amy to be your wife?"

"And suppose I did, and she refused?"

"And supposing you did, and she accepted?"

"Why then," I replied, "there would be no end of bother with that vulgar brute her father; but do you think Amy would accept me?"

"I really cannot tell, 'faint heart never won fair lady,' you know, and I think Amy likes you; but love is quite another thing. Amy is too fond of her father to marry without his consent, besides, is dependent on him for everything, and for all it may seem unromantic you know, my dear brother, you must have something beyond mere amiability and good looks in your wife."

"In India," I said, "I can afford to keep a wife, what with help from the governor, pension for my arm, &c., &c."

"You could hardly expect Amy to go out to India," said Jane, "when, if you married with her father's consent, he would be able to give her enough for any husband; so, Mr. Philip, if you think of ever asking Amy to be your wife, be advised by me, and leave off talking of her father as 'that snob Jones,' and be less sensitive about his remarks. I think often when you have imagined he was rude, it was not intended by him to be so, but rather a joke than anything else."

"I can't bear him," I said, "and he hates me, so he would be an everlasting barrier."

"Just as you choose," said Jane, "but think over this barrier, without being a humbug, or even

seeming to appreciate his jokes, you need not resent them. He may, perhaps, some day like you."

"Oh yes," said I, going away, "dogs and cats get very fond of each other, I could not; and as to appreciating his jokes, that I am not likely to do, considering that they are generally at my own expense."

Next day, kissing the girls, and getting a quiet whisper from Jane to "call in at London" on my way back, I started for Windermere.

It was bitterly cold, and more than once I regretted having started off in such a hurry without having first written to Elliot, if it was only to say I was coming, and ensure his being at home.

The railway hotel looked so comfortable at Birmingham, and the country all round so snowy, bleak, and miserable, that I put up for the night; and did not get to the quaint, though not unpicturesque house occupied by Elliot, until nearly sunset, or what was intended for sunset, but which in this wintry evening was dark masses of clouds slightly tinged with an angry red.

As I opened the little iron gate, and proceeded up the gravel walk, my attention was directed to a tall man, with his hands in his great-coat pockets, giving directions in somewhat a peremptory manner to a red-headed urchin at his side, the same red-headed urchin looking the picture of frozen misery.

"Now, Johnny," said the tall man, "run like a

lamplighter, and tell your mother that I will come, though she ought to send for the parish doctor."

"Hallo, Giant," I called out, throwing a pebble against his back.

"Eh, who are you? I know the face too, one of the old corps, I know?"

"Villars," I said.

"Of course," answered Elliot, "I ought to have known it, but I did not know you with your arm off; besides, you look thinner and older. Come in and see my little wife, and have dinner; but I must keep you waiting a short time, for I promised that youngster to go down to his mother."

"Doing vicar, eh, or Samaritan?"

"Why, only my duty; which now instead of killing men is curing souls, though in this instance it ought to be for the doctor, not for myself, as that child's mother wants my opinion as to whether her child has the small pox or measles."

"I wouldn't go," I said, "let her find out, or go to the doctor."

"Then you won't do for what is called the parson, of the parish," replied Giant, "a minister must be come-at-able, if I may use such an expression, at all times, and after all it is not a quarter of an hour's walk for me, and will please the old woman."

"Good natured old Giant, kind as ever," I said, and followed him into the little dining room.

Mrs. Elliot was indeed a little woman, appearing

doubly so as she came forward to greet her husband on his entering the room. Seeing a stranger, she drew back slightly, and then on my introduction with the words, "one of my oldest friends," she immediately again advanced, and greeted me most cordially.

"Excuse me for half an hour," said Elliot, "I must be off to this old woman, so wait dinner until I return."

Away he went, and Mrs. Elliot and myself engaged in a long talk over scenes passed with her husband in India. "Do you know where Alfred has gone?" asked Mrs. Elliot.

"After some old woman who wants his medical opinion as to whether her child has the small pox or measles."

"Small pox!" said the little woman. "I do wish Alfred would leave the doctor to settle these things; he is so good and kind, that all the people send for him for everything."

"So I told him, but he replied that it was his duty, so away he has gone. But I won't judge him by myself, for I fear I should let the old women, with their ailments, all go to Jericho."

"Don't say so to him though, for he is very particular. But here he comes," and Mrs. Elliot's face brightened, as she heard her husband's footstep on the gravel walk.

"I have not kept you long," said Elliot, entering.

"Now, Villars, come away, wash your hands, and wifey order dinner, for I am as hungry as a hunter."

Directly we got into his dressing room, came hundreds of questions, and hardly had I time to reply to one half, before the quiet knock at the door by the maid, informed us that dinner was ready, and on entering the drawing room we found Mrs. Elliot waiting for us.

A nice quiet dinner, and over the great fire, half coal and half peat, did we talk over old times.

I found Elliot much altered, but not for the worst. The dare devil had given way to a more steady line of conduct, and I could see that the duel at Meerut had not been forgotten. After prayers, and the servants had been dismissed, we sat for hours, until long after the bells chimed midnight, talking of the past.

From my bedroom window I could see the smooth lake, its surface looking white and chill in the pale moonlight; but the night was far too cold, and I far too sleepy to find time or pleasure in looking at romantic scenery.

Next morning at half-past eight we assembled; the bright, happy face of Mrs. Elliot, making the thin, wintry sunshine look brighter. Breakfast over, and Elliot and myself went lion seeing, and parishioner stirring up; whilst the "little wifey," as he termed Mrs. Elliot, remained at home busy in household duties.

Thus passed days; once or twice I received letters from home, telling me that Henry had been down there, and that the Major had been ill, though nothing very seriously; and as I heard no more about a relapse, I determined ere long to bring the Lake visit to an end, and return to St. Helens, viz., London.

Once whilst at the Lake, I received a long letter from Morris, thanking me for having seen his mother, and full of praise of her. He told me that a new commanding officer had been sent to the regiment. In his words, "a regular old fool," one that knew nothing, but greatly feared having what is called an Adjutant's regiment; so thwarted that officer in every way, allowed the captains of companies no power, and was always making pets of particular men. "Altogether," he added, "the regiment and the service is going to old Harry, and I shall come back to merry England as soon as I can."

"Thank you," said Elliot, after he had read the letter, "I think it is such a pity that commanding officers of regiments are changed so often. Just as a regiment is getting into some sort of shape, the commanding officer is removed, and another with perhaps a totally different idea of discipline is sent—"

"But," I interrupted, "supposing the officer holding the command is a bad one, his speedy removal is advantageous."

"Yes, but that should always be insured by a proper system of supervision. Instead of having worn out idiots in command of divisions, or used up Peninsular veterans for Commanders-in-Chief, there should be only chosen for these appointments men of known vigour of mind and body. Under the present system, no commanding officer cares for any one except the Adjutant-General, as he thinks with justice, that they are no more brilliant than himself, so not likely to detect short comings."

"Are you an advocate for all appointments being given to the Queen's service, that is, I mean, for their coming in for a large slice of the loaves and fishes?" asked Elliot.

"Yes, to a certain extent; not to share equally with Company's officers, without they equally share their exile. I would, however, insist on the same rule applying to all, which, at present, is shamefully evaded—namely, passing in the languages. Now-a-days, passing for the Company's officer is no longer a sham, and however brilliant he may be, no appointment is given to him until he passes; whereas, with the Queen's officer, if he has interest, on he goes to the staff. I object to this system, as much for its unfairness, as to the damage the service suffers, for many of these men are put in the public works' department, and I defy a man getting the work properly done there, without a very, very good knowledge of the language."

"True enough," said Elliot, "for I remember once in building a house, the bother I had to make the fellows understand all I wanted, and apply the same to a bridge for the Government. Besides how can they make out a proper estimate, when they do not know and can't inquire even the prices of labour or material. But don't you think it is unfair that they should have the same advantages as ourselves, considering they can go home whenever they can save a few pounds, and it counts for service?"

"Certainly, I think that if they take Indian appointments, the same rule should apply to all. It is certainly unfair that after Captain Tomnoddy has fooled away a fortune in England, that he is to come out with Horse Guard influence, supersede me in my appointment, and that without passing. Stay one year until he can save enough to leave "the beastly country," as he terms it, and then go home again; whilst I have come out to India for twenty years, if sick from exposure in my work may go home, but have to work out every day's leave again in India, and besides lose my appointment. No, the present system is not fair, give all an equal chance, and I then advocate the admission of the younger, and probably fresher ideas in some of Her Majesty's service."

"And," said Mrs. Elliot, after having been a quiet listener through all this dull conversation, "people fresh from home cannot understand the natives, and

may be cruel to them. But if one was wounded in the Company's service, and had to come to England, does he have to remain longer in India for it?"

"As to cruelty to natives, I think they are generally very well treated, too much liberty for them, as they cannot understand what is called 'the liberty of the subject.' But still, I would not put any man into an appointment until he has been at least two years in India, and passed. By that time, most probably, he will have some insight into the characters of the race around him; moreover, the first home sickness having worn off, he will not be wanting to run back again home. About being wounded in the Company's service, the rule holds good the same. I am now home on account of this arm, and have three years given me to get well; one year and more has elapsed, and I am no better, still I shall have to work out every day of this leave again in India, that is, must serve twenty-three, instead of twenty years. But in Her Majesty's service, every day spent in it counts for half-pay."

"Well, I think it a great shame," said little Mrs. Elliot, "I wouldn't fight for them."

"Perhaps they would then get plenty more who would," said Elliot.

"That they would," I added. "The Company are excellent masters; and, although they, for some absurd reasons, appear to dislike their officers coming

to England; they are generous enough, and I for one cannot abuse them."

Before we had finished tea it was very late, and time for bed. Here in the solitude of my chamber did I think over what my future fate would be. How happy I could be, were my lot to be as smooth as was Elliot's. In this quiet vicarage, what perfect peace seemed to exist. Man and wife so loving, and so trusting; between them no difference of opinion appeared ever to exist; with her, her husband's will was all she knew or wished to know, not that she obeyed or even yielded—with her, her husband's wish was anticipated. Her equal few could be. In her was my beau ideal of the clergyman's wife, no straining for effect, no pride of dress, no pleasure in hearing of her neighbour's faults, perfect good temper, and a firm belief that next to her God, the man that God had given her as a husband was to be obeyed, honoured and loved. His will was her will, and this without an effort at resigning her own.

I could not help giving my thoughts their fling, and wondered if ever I should be as happy. Even supposing Amy consented to cast her lot with mine, I felt that I could never make the same even tempered husband as did Elliot, or could I find happiness and pleasure in the mere doing one's duty—the sense of which was evidently Elliot's chief thought. With him duty was everything, and it was the

sacrificing of all self-interests to this sense, that was one of the great bonds of union between the man and wife. From this, fancy rambled on, until midnight it resumed the old shape; which was hopes blighted, and Mr. Jones hard-hearted. Seeing this I brought my ruminations to an end, and dreamt of Amy, parson's wives, Elliot, and queen's officers.

CHAPTER IV.

NEXT day I began to make preparations for my departure for London; more particularly as I was anxious to return to St. Helens, the reports from there saying my father was far from well, having had something very like a paralytic seizure.

In London I found the member out of town, but Amy was there with her aunt. This to me was pleasant news, and entering the drawing-room I found Amy alone.

After answering all her questions regarding the people at Chepstow, and finding the report told me by the servant of the absence of Mr. Jones verified, I began to feel very hot and uncomfortable, and half to regret that I should have come so far to advance so little. My efforts at conversation were very lame, mere short sentences requiring shorter answers. Then dreary pauses, in the midst of some of these I had more than once determined to take my leave; but was restrained, as much from the fear of being

ridiculed on my return home, as from the desire to know my fate.

Thus went an hour, and, perhaps another would have followed, had not Amy recalled my wandering ideas by saying that her aunt would be back immediately, and that I had better stay to see her.

Next moment I had said something; what, I cannot now remember, but it answered the purpose, for Amy understood my meaning, and her blushing silence shewed me that she was not offended.

"Amy," I said, reassured and wonderfully bold, "dear, dear Amy, may I then hope some day to call you mine."

"Oh! Mr. Villars," she replied, "what would papa say if he knew what you have said; he would be so angry and would never forgive me or consent."

"Amy dear, listen to me," I said, "I do not urge disobedience to your father, I can hardly hope for his consent, for I know he has never liked me; but give me yours. I am willing to wait, and promise you to try everything in my power to win over your father."

"Mr. Villars," she answered, "if I consent, do you promise to avoid giving offence to my father. Remember he is my father, and though rough in manners, has been ever kind to me. Nothing earthly will make me oppose his wishes."

"Amy, dearest, I do consent," I replied, "and as

far as lies in my power you shall never have cause to think that I wish to evade this promise. Oh! Amy, dear good Amy, I never expected this happiness! Often when you were with us at St. Helens did I long to tell you all I have told, but thought you might be offended or disliked me."

"Dislike!" said she, "that I never could; or could I feel offended at the expressed love of one of whom I had never heard anything but good, and whose patience under pain and illness even the hardest of hearts would have admired."

"Thank you, darling; and so my good behaviour at St. Helens won your heart; and now, Amy dearest, I want you to say a word."

"What is it?"

"Only—my dearest Philip!"

"How odd," said she blushing; "why should I say it?"

"Am I not?" I asked.

"Of course you are;" and bending her beautiful head she half whispered, "my dearest Philip!"

"Thank you, dear one. I never thought my name pretty before; and now before I take my leave and tell my joy to those I love next you, let me ask you to tell all to Mr. Jones, and I need not add, try and get his consent."

"Dearest—does that do?" said she blushing and looking down, "will you wait until aunt comes. Of course I will not try to get papa to consent."

"I would rather not see your aunt, she is a stranger; and just now, dear one, I would rather not let a stranger intrude upon my happiness, and I am so completely happy."

"Well, dearest, just as you like, and now let me ask what Jane and Ella will say to this when you tell them?"

"Say—you, dear girl, that I am what I feel myself to be, the luckiest of mortals. Oh, Amy, darling, it was through them that I came to know and love you. Remember, if you had not come to St. Helens I should never have seen you. Jane and Ella have always loved you as a sister; and please heaven, if all goes well, dear, dear Amy, as such in reality, they shall ever love you. I have never been happy since you left St. Helens, and I could not conceal the cause from Jane."

"Did she tell you to ask me to be your wife?" asked Amy colouring.

"Not exactly, darling, though I know for you to be so was their fondest wish; for in their words, 'England cannot find a second Amy Jones.' But seeing me in that unhappy state, which you might have observed half an hour ago—"

"Oh, no I didn't," she said wickedly.

"Very well then, you didn't," I continued. "But being very unhappy and given to losing my temper and wandering about damp shrubberies; Jane one day recommended my taking London on my way to the

north. This led to my asking why, and then she got out of me that a certain dear good girl named Amy, was to me more than all the world beside."

"But," said Amy, evidently interested; "did she tell you to speak to me?"

"Why, yes; she said, 'faint heart never won fair lady,' and praised you up so much, that I determined on my return from the Lakes to settle my fate; and here is the result, I can call you my own, dearest, engaged to be my wife. Dear Amy, let what may come, I shall never forget this moment."

"Dearest Philip, I am too pleased, may all go well with us; but I must say that I know there will be difficulty with papa. Do not ever be angry; perhaps by patience you may yet win him over. In me trust, and God helping us, all will eventually go well."

"For you," I replied, straining her towards me, "dearest, I will ever be patient and trusting. I know how much you will have to suffer for my sake, and I will try to show you how I appreciate such goodness. I can hardly hope to win over Mr. Jones, and until that is done, I own I see no prospect of calling you really my own; but I will, Heaven assisting me, not add to your vexations, but be faithful and true."

"I know it, dearest," said Amy, "I know I can trust you. All I fear, is your giving way when annoyed, perhaps insulted, by my father. He has

never forgotten your telling him at a dinner party not to again address you; and when he hears that you, who made no secret in your dislike to him, have loved his daughter, he will not only refuse consent, but may aggravate his refusal with taunts and insults."

"He may safely do so, Amy," I replied. "My promise is given, and I repeat it, for you, darling, I would submit to anything, and know that for me you would do more."

"My dear, dear, Philip!" said Amy, almost hysterical; "for you I would put up with anything. You have my purest, holiest love, may God ever bless and preserve you!"

"And you, too, dear one," I said, implanting a kiss on the pure white forehead. "I must now go; and then to gladden other hearts besides my own. Oh, Amy, all at St. Helens will be so glad to hear this. If this illness of my father's should be dangerous, I know that it would smooth his last hours to hear that we are engaged. Again bless you dear one, and farewell!"

By that night's mail train I was on my way to Chepstow.

CHAPTER V.

At breakfast I was unexpected; and many were the questions asked about my coming so suddenly; with a sly one from Jane, as to whether I returned viâ London. These answered, I had time to ask about them all, and finish my breakfast.

Breakfast over, I went up-stairs to see the Major, who had never, since the first attack, been able to leave his bed before the middle of the day. I was shocked to see him looking so broken; the once strong man was now feeble, and I could scarcely disguise from myself, that he would never again be fully restored to health.

He was glad to see me, and had much to say about the last visit paid by Henry, as from the excitement caused by a quarrel that occurred between them, his disease had been aggravated, and his recovery retarded. Money of course was wanted, and as it was not given to the extent demanded, high words ensued, which ended in his forbidding

his son revisiting the house. This order was immediately acted upon by Henry, who withdrew from his father's bed-side, and entering the drawingroom, informed his mother and sisters that he would not again darken their doors. Then lighting his little black pipe at the fire, he departed, as he said, for Liverpool.

What appeared to prey upon my father's mind was, that, perhaps, he had been unkind to Henry; and that, feeling this, the wayward son had resented it, and left his home for ever. That such was not the case I knew well; and, moreover, felt pretty sure that so soon as the last supplies were exhausted, Master Henry and his little black pipe would reappear at St. Helens.

All this I told my father; but finding that the subject only made him sorrowful, I introduced another, certainly to myself more agreeable, and probably not unpleasant to my listener. It was regarding my engagement to Amy.

He was certainly pleased, and said much in my future wife's favour, but used no measured language towards her father. In his idea, nothing could exceed the arrogance and selfishness of Jones; and his refusal to have anything to say to me, was a certain proof in the old gentleman's mind. Amy he praised, and thought that whoever called her wife, might be considered a fortunate man, but then

he added, "there was the drawback of that vulgar dog, Jones."

On telling him of my promise to avoid abusing or vexing Mr. Jones, I was told that "I was a fool to give it," and that however anxious I might be to keep it, it would be impossible to do so with such an irritating man as my future father-in-law.

Altogether he did not hold me out any great hopes of attaining my end, but said plainly he saw numerous difficulties; however, to prevent one, which might be money, he told me to inform Jones that he would for the future allow me one hundred a year, in addition to whatever pay I might receive from the Indian Government, adding, "my dear boy, I sometimes think I shall never recover, and that this is my death bed, if so, you will be well enough off to claim most girls for a wife, and may God bless her whoever she may be.

In reply, I thanked him for the addition to my income; although knowing how much Henry received, the promise of one hundred pounds yearly did not make me feel overcome with gratitude. Then I begged he would dismiss from his mind the thought of dying, not make any difference between myself and brother; and finally avoid as far as possible before me, abusing Mr. Jones, as I might chime in, and thus scatter to the winds my promise to his daughter.

On returning to the dining-room, I met Jane there alone, and was immediately surrounded with questions, all having reference to my London visit.

"And so Amy has accepted you; did she seem surprised? what did she say? did Mr. Jones know of it? was he angry?" and so on for five minutes.

"One question, dear Jane, at a time, please," I said, after waiting until she had been silent for a few moments; and then seeing her ready to listen, I told her that Amy had accepted me—that Mr. Jones was propitiously out of the way at the time I went to town—and, that thereby, I had avoided his anger, which, nevertheless, I felt pretty sure would be something considerable so soon as he heard of my goings on. "However," I added, "I promised Amy that come what may, I am to speak well, or rather not to speak badly of her father, as she informed me that there was no love lost between us, and that if I would obtain his consent, it could be only through conciliation, not opposition."

"I suppose she would not marry without his consent," said Jane thoughtfully.

"No, that she told me plainly, nor would I urge her to do so."

"Well, brother mine," said Jane, "I wish you success, but methinks you will have a difficult card to play. You and papa both hate Mr. Jones, and it will surprise me if after a year's indulgence in

unlimited abuse, you manage to avoid going on as usual."

"I will try; but you can tell the mother and Ella of this engagement, and add one thing, that before me they will speak of old Jones more respectfully, that is, in the same way as I have just made the governor promise to do, namely, without abuse. I want them to do this, as it will render my task easier."

"What henpecked already?" said Jane, "you know we females very seldom abuse Mr. Jones; only thinking him a disagreeable, unpolished old gentleman, whereas you and papa think no names bad enough."

"You may be sure," I replied, laughing at the idea of my being henpecked, "that I shall not abuse old Jones; and let me add, am not henpecked, only having given a promise, and wish as far as possible to keep it."

"Old Jones," said she laughing, and running towards the door, "what a disrespectful way to speak of one's future respected father-in-law. I shall go and tell mamma and Ella of your engagement," and away she went, evidently delighted with all that had occurred.

Left to myself, I remained for some time wrapped in thought, and after turning over every plan in my mind, and bringing them to nothing conclusive, I resolved to write to Mr. Jones, telling him of my

interview with his daughter, and to put my case before him fairly and honestly, trusting to his generosity.

I had just finished my letter, in the composition of which no trouble was spared. Knowing that both father and daughter would read it, and that they would have words regarding me, I endeavoured in asking his consent to our union, to avoid shewing either fear for him or dislike; as in the one case Mr. Jones might consider me cringing, and in the other, Amy might think I was haughty, and unwilling to check my dislike even in writing.

"Well, Philip, dear," said Ella, throwing her arms round my neck, "and so Amy is to be our sister-in-law. I see you have been writing to the stern parent."

"I have just asked old Jones to consent," I replied, "and wish you would scribble a note to Amy, saying how happy you all are, and somehow make out that I highly esteem Mr. Jones, though have not been in the habit of shewing it."

"Old Jones, as you term him," said Ella, "is to be informed that you have always esteemed him, only he was foolish enough to think it dislike; and now that you want to marry his daughter, you beg he will not be perverse any longer."

"Stuff," I replied, "I do not want humbug, because he knows well enough I don't like him; but

that I think him a good master to workmen, and he is certainly fond of Amy."

"Very well, then," said Ella, looking provokingly simple, "I will tell Amy that her father looks after his own interests, and is, odd to say, fond of his daughter."

"No, no, write away; and I shall go and have some skating on the cattle pool near the river."

A few days after this, I received two letters, one from Amy, the other from her father. The one from Amy was all I could wish, but held out little hope of her father giving his consent. He, it appeared, was very angry when he heard of our engagement, and was very anxious that it should be given up, as his consent would never be given.

He abused me roundly, and left the room, as Amy wrote, "in a dreadful passion, saying he would reduce your pride. However," she added, "persevere in not resenting his anger, and if you do not want to give it up, perhaps some day, very distant though, I fear, dearest, he will agree to our wishes."

"I wish to give it up," thought I, "surely Amy cannot suppose I do; and she cannot be inclined to do so, because her father withholds his consent, surely she knows me better than to think that I would resign any woman because there was some difficulty in getting her. Thus did I fret myself for an hour, leaving her father's letter with the seal

unbroken, lying on the table before me. Again I read Amy's letter, and then the words "persevere in not resenting his anger" struck me as having anything but a reference to my "giving it up," or to any wish on her part for such an event. Having now taken a new view of the matter, I broke the seal of old Jones' letter, and was not unprepared for, nor much disgusted at the contents.

After a few lines of quiet sarcasm at my coming up to town when he was away, he launched forth at my, as he called them, pretensions—not though as regards money, for of that he said his daughter was well enough off, and my additional £100 a-year, would hardly be an extra inducement for his consent; but my pretensions seemed to consist in having asked for the daughter of a man, to whom I had once said, "I wished to have no communication with," "and now," he wrote, "allow me to turn the tables, and decline having any with you. I tell you plainly, Mr. Villars," he went on, "I dislike the army, and though pitying you for your misfortunes in getting so badly wounded, consider that you brought it on yourself; and in conclusion, can only reiterate my wish that neither on this, nor on any other subject do you communicate with me."

"Angry old gent," thought I, "not to communicate with him, but still he does not say anything about not doing so with Amy, and as I see Amy is going to her aunt's, I shall write to her."

Look at the letter any way I liked, I could not see any cause for hope; and although some parts of it were written in a kinder tone, still there was a spirit of dislike pervading the whole thing, that shewed me how little I had to hope for a change in his sentiments. Under these circumstances, I resolved to avoid annoying him, and through Amy and her aunt, whom I hoped to win over to my side, eventually to make Jones yield. I saw it would be no easy matter, as my remarks at all places and times regarding his disagreeable manners, must have been retailed to him; and for fear he should not be sure of how much I disliked him, my unlucky speech at Davis' house had proved it. Of course, in one so much younger than himself, and in one, holding no position whatever in the county—the telling the member not to communicate with you, and that his acquaintance was undesirable, was somewhat a bold proceeding, and one which was not likely to be forgiven or forgotten by most men, more particularly by such an one as Mr. Jones. I now very much wished I had acted differently, and had been more conciliating, and less prone to take affront. However, as the milk was spilled, there was no use in crying over it, and so I resolved for the future to be very amiable, if ever I had an opportunity, and to write long letters to Amy.

Ella and Jane coming in, I showed them Mr. Jones' letter, and as they agreed with me that there

was no prohibition in it to my writing to Amy, I resolved to do so immediately, and thus at once commence making friends with her aunt; for I felt an inward conviction, that Amy would have sufficient influence over her aunt to draw her over to our side.

Amy acknowledged my letter, and said that at my request she had written to Mr. Jones, begging him to consent, and that her aunt had added her entreaties to hers. With this I was satisfied, and hoped, though not over confidently, that her letter might have the desired effect; however, three days afterwards I was relieved from my doubts on that head, by receiving a hastily written, somewhat illegible scrawl from Mr. Jones, saying that in writing to me for no further communications to be held, he had meant with his family as well as himself, and that if I was a gentleman, such for the future I would consider his wish, adding, "That nothing earthly shall make me consent to an union so much opposed to my views and wishes."

This I had almost expected, so was not so much hurt about it; however, come what might, I was resolved not to give up Amy, and though now bound by a promise to the daughter not to vex the father, and to the father, by honour not to write to the daughter; I thought I should not be playing false to either by making use of my sisters, through whom at least kind remembrances, and proofs of my

determination to keep up the engagement, could always be sent.

This plan I communicated to my sisters, and through them I heard of her who now had become the greatest of earthly things to me.

Thus passed the time, until spring came again. My father daily grew weaker; now seldom leaving his bed-room, and becoming, if possible, kinder to me than ever. Perhaps it was the knowledge of my affair with Jones that drew him towards me, and the anxiety, almost always expressed, that before he died his family should be married and settled. Of Amy, he always spoke in the most affectionate way, frequently adding, that he could die happy were she my wife. Of her father, notwithstanding his promise to me and his own sickly state, he would seldom say any good, and more than once told me that it would be advantageous to all parties if the old gentleman resided in the churchyard instead of at The Elms. To this I mentally consented, more particularly as time wore away, and I saw myself no nearer my object than at first; however, I was forbidden to say so, and wished Micawber-like that something might turn up.

CHAPTER VI.

Some time after the events mentioned in the last chapter, Mr. Jones came down to The Elms, however, unaccompanied by his daughter; but as I considered that much might be done by a personal interview, I determined on riding over.

On my card being sent up, I was informed that the member was at home, and was left to my reflections, until he should be disengaged, in the dreadfully business-like looking library.

About half-an-hour had passed, not as my reader may imagine in the pleasantest possible manner to myself. First I felt too warm, and resolved to be determined with Mr. Jones, then I felt a chill, and wished I had not come, fearing that I should lose my temper, or being insulted by Jones would forget my promise to Amy, and say things that I should for ever afterwards regret. I had devised some cunningly arranged scheme for disarming of all anger, and making him immediately hug me to his breast as the much loved son-in-law, when my beautiful ideas

were scattered to the winds, by the abrupt entrance of Amy's father and his abrupt question of, "to what was he to attribute the honour of this visit?"

For a moment I hesitated, but remembering how much I had at stake, I said boldly, "That I had come regarding my engagement to his daughter, and that it was coming near the time for my departure for India, and that I would not leave this country until I had in person asked her father's consent."

"You remember my letter, Sir," he began; "I told you I wished what you once wished, that there should be no communications between us, I have only now to repeat that desire."

"I am aware fully, Mr. Jones," I said respectfully but firmly, "and can assure you I have avoided communications with your family; as an officer and gentleman I consider such my duty, and will perform it; but it is equally my duty not to allow any stone to be unturned that may lead to the consummation of my wish, and, I believe, your daughter's happiness. Therefore I have asked for this interview."

"You have it then, and I beg it may not be repeated. I will never give my consent, and my daughter will not marry without it;" said Jones, looking half inquiringly into my face.

"To that, Sir," I replied, "neither she nor myself would consent. I should be the last man to urge disobedience in a child to a parent, and we are willing to wait for each other."

"Doomsday or my death, then it will be," said Jones.

"I hope not so long, but still, whatever the length, until Miss Jones resigns me, I do not resign her. I ask you once again to think over it, and not longer to continue our unhappiness."

"Mr. Villars, I deny there is any unhappiness; I have thought over it, and repeat my wish, that you will neither continue this engagement nor communicate with my family," said Jones.

"I should have hoped you would have determined otherwise," I replied, somewhat cast down by the additional demand for the engagement to be broken off; "but, Mr. Jones, as I before promised, so I do now, that I will not write to your daughter, or annoy you. I reserve to your daughter the power of annulling the engagement, if she consents to its being given up, but not till then."

"Good morning, Mr. Villars," said the member bowing stiffly; and taking up my hat I was ere long riding slowly back to St. Helens.

I thought over all that I had said, and I felt that nothing that I had said could have given annoyance, and that Mr. Jones would not, at any rate in this instance, be able to tax me with pride or want of self-control. As to his wish for me to give up the engagement, that I felt was too much to expect, and seeing that he did not press it, made me suppose he also did not expect me to consent.

In leaving the being broken off to Amy, I felt

secure in its continuation, and half hoped that when he told my answer to her, and saw how resolute she was to continue the engagement; he would alter his determination, and no longer oppose our united wishes. Thus ruminating, I arrived at St. Helens and told the result of my interview to all at home. My mother and sisters were much annoyed and did, I fear, forget their promise, abusing Mr. Jones in not over nice language. As to my father, he was too ill to much notice what had occurred, and simply stated that he wished all was settled, and that before he should cease to live, Amy might be his daughter-in-law.

Some days passed over, and with them came an improvement in the Major's health, and he was now able with my assistance to get out on the lawn. How I watched that feeble step, and now almost hoped that my poor father might again be amongst us; but still, I could never get myself to entirely think that he would fully recover, and dreaded that this slight improvement was but the flickering of the flame before it was extinguished for ever. Sometimes I would read to him, and now he was well enough to enter more fully into my future plans. To me the change was more than gratifying; and as some letters were received by me from India, saying that my company was to be had by purchase, I did not hesitate in asking him for the money.

The sum being large, as there were two steps to take place, I requested the Major, in advancing me money, would deduct the sum from anything he might hereafter leave me, and thus never allow Henry to say that I had the same advantages as himself; as this I knew he would certainly do.

I never saw my father so much excited before, as in his reply to my request for assistance. It seemed to me as if he had almost wished for an opportunity to tell me how he felt never having assisted me to the same extent as his other son. He told me that it had never been his intention to make any difference between us; but that having once put Henry into the English army, it was his duty to keep him there, and this he found he could not do without allowing him a large yearly income.

"But you never allowed me any," I said, "and if it had not been for the presents of twenty and thirty pounds now and then, I do not know what I should have done; for to purchase steps, keep up the band, and pay funds, and other subscriptions, was imposible out of Indian pay."

"I know it now," he said, "but really thought your Indian pay was more, and your expenses less; but never mind, you shall not suffer now. I have a few hundreds at my bankers, which I have always kept by me, fearing a larger demand than usual from Henry. This you shall have, and," added he, taking my hand, "my dear son, never again request

that anything may be deducted from the sum to be left to you."

"But Henry," I began.

"Bother Henry," interrupted the Major, shewing somewhat of the old spirit, "What have either of you to do with each other; he has had more than ever you can have, and if I choose to give you a few hundreds what matters that to him? I will pay these two steps, and glad to do so. Rather odd if I did not pay for your Company, when I paid for your brother's Majority?"

"I can only thank you," I replied, "but really my dear, kind father, I should rather the money be deducted. It is nearly seven hundred pounds, and I half think I am robbing my sisters in asking you to pay it."

"Never fear for your sisters, they are provided for, and so give me my check book, and I will give you the required sum," said my father.

This I did, and was able to send the money out by the next post, and the return mail shewed Lieutenant Philip Villars to be Captain of a company vice Major Ewart retired.

There were two letters for me; one from Stumps or Waller, and the other from Morris, both were full of the two steps now offered, and very anxious that I should purchase Ewart, as being senior Lieutenant my share would be large; and Ewart cared so little about retiring, that he had declared if the smallest

quota was not forthcoming by a certain date, he would not send in his resignation papers. Morris obtained his Majority, and talked now of retiring himself next year, so soon as he had made enough, or rather saved enough money to cover his present outlay, and to keep, as he wrote, "my dearest old mother in comfort." The rest of the letters were on general subjects, abuse of the intense heat occupying a large portion, and hopes that if the Russian War continued, an Indian contingent might be demanded, "For," wrote Waller, "I believe our Sepoys can fight just as well as Russians, and led by British officers, better; besides it would do the army good, for they are so petted and spoiled by the Government, getting everything they cry for, that a little knocking about out of their own blessed hot country would do them good. They would have to stuff some of their caste into their pockets. How I hate this system of caste, I mean to the extent it is carried; for I always think the higher castes make the best soldiers; but here with us, I declare, the Colonel is half a Brahmin. We have been ordered to enlist Sikhs, and daily some fine strapping fellows come to me for enlistment, and I send them to the Colonel, who is certain to find some fault with them and they are rejected. The reason is the villainous native officers, and your *pet*, the Havildar Major, hate these Sikhs, and always poison old Dunderhead's ear. I know he would like to get me to resign the

Adjutancy, or turn me out if he could, because I sent in charges against Subadar Adjoodiah Tewarry, and the Havildar Major, for receiving bribes.

"I found these fellows taking money from Sikhs, and all that were enlisted, and being paid by men on promotion. Of course they were acquitted, because none of the men would come forward when they saw the Colonel was intent on their acquittal. I believe the good men liked me for this, but your pet scowls at me on parade like a tiger. Come along out to us, and then we shall have one more with the regiment that understands the men, and a non-supporter of Dunderhead."

Morris wrote on the discipline kept up in the regiment, much in the same strain; and by their letters I could see that the Lieutenant-Colonel in command was one of those half Brahminised old fools that ruin regiments. Many of these are much greater sticklers for caste than the men themselves, and think that in the Government order for the caste of the men not to be interfered with, is meant that the Christian religion, and the feelings of a large body of the officers, are to be thrown aside, so that they may, by their patronage of heathen ceremonies, prove to the Sepoys that Government, as represented in the commanding officer, approves of heathenism. Now here in my own regiment, a man had been placed in command who knew nothing about the men; and yet instead of acquiring information from the officers

of Companies and his Adjutant, he gets jealous of them, and willingly listens to the native officers and Adjutant's native assistant. These latter tell him just as much as they choose, and ere long the good Sepoys or non-commissioned officers that do their duty, not being favourites with these indolence loving lot, fall equally in the esteem of their commanding officer, and are passed over for rewards and promotion. Thus, in course of time, the men look up to some native officer, or the Havildar Major for everything; and the power of officers commanding companies or the Adjutant is laughed at, and almost openly defied.

As I thought over all this, I could not help feeling sorrowful that the old regiment should have got into such a bad state, but knew my rejoining would not mend matters; but having to look silently on, would cause me annoyance, and do no good to anybody. The only hope I could see for the smashing up of the present system, would be in the Colonel's removal, which we junior officers could not effect, or in the admission of large bodies of Sikhs as recruits, and to this the Colonel was not likely to consent. The bravery of the Sikhs was never doubted; in fact, being stronger and braver than the Bojepore and Oudh men, there was fear that they might cause dissension in the ranks; and worse than all in the eyes of commanding officers of the old régime, the Sikhs

were dirty, and gave trouble, besides eat flesh, and get drunk, awful sins in the eyes of a Brahmin.

As the Major continued to improve, I took advantage of an invitation from Davis, and with him spent a week. After the first day or two, I discovered that he had received an inkling of my being engaged to the member's daughter; and so knowing that Mr. Jones had a high opinion of Davis, I determined on asking him to exert himself in my favour. This he promised to do; and in writing to Ella told her all my hopes, all for the special benefit of Amy, who kept up quite a wonderful correspondence with my sisters, and they with her.

Mr. Jones answered by return of post, giving no further reasons than he had given to me for refusal, hoped that I had given up the engagement, would never consent, and was not likely to forget the insulting language I had used towards him at a dinner party, &c., &c.

Thus were my last hopes blasted; and I now determined to speak no more to old Jones on the subject. That unlucky speech at a dinner party appeared to be more than he could forget, and as all my efforts at appearing meek and mild were evidently thrown away, I thought it as good policy as any other to ignore Jones altogether, and content myself with hearing of Amy's welfare through Jane and Ella.

CHAPTER VII.

On my return to St. Helens, I found that the Major had that morning had a relapse, and was so bad that my mother had telegraphed to London for a physician of eminence.

Until his arrival, we all were in a most anxious state, as the unconscious and helpless state of the Major led us to suppose that immediate dissolution was not improbable. At the same time, I wrote to Henry, requesting his return; directing the letter to an hotel at Liverpool, to which he used to request his letters to be sent; but whether he was staying there then we knew not, as since the last parting with his family, he had not corresponded, or replied to any letter sent. However, the letter found him, and both he and the London practitioner arrived close together.

Doctor Onslow thought but badly of my father's state; and told us plainly that we might expect the worst. There might be, he said, a few days consciousness, but that he never could recover. After

two days there was a slight improvement, and as Doctor Onslow had a large practice to attend to elsewhere, he departed, leaving directions for future treatment with the family practitioner—who, to say the truth, appeared to know as much, and be more obliging than the great London Bashaw.

We all took it in turns to watch by the bed-side, and dreary enough was it all the long day in that darkened chamber. Sometimes the poor invalid would appear to awake as if from a sleep, and talk sensibly, recognising his wife and children, then immediately sink into a dreamy state of mental imbecility, that made those that loved him best almost long for the hour that would, in the world to come, reillumine his intellect.

One dark afternoon, Ella and myself had gone for a walk towards the Wind Cliff, leaving the Major much in his usual state, under the care of his wife, when turning down one of the lanes, we were passed by Mr. Jones on horseback. To my sister he bowed, but did not return my salute. This did not pass unnoticed by Ella, who immediately observed that "The member's manners do not improve with his years."

"I fancy it is my engagement to his daughter that he wishes to break off, that makes him so rude to me," I observed, half inclined to excuse Mr. Jones.

"Well," said Ella, "Amy is the best girl in the world, and none would I like so well for a sister-in-

law; but still I would, if I were her, make my father civil to all gentlemen."

"You would, would you?" I said. "Why if you had such an obstinate old gent for a governor as is Amy's father, I should like to see you make him do anything he disliked. I am sure Amy has to put up with much on account of this engagement from her father, and yet she will not give it up; for, remember, I told Jones once, that I left the breaking of it off to his daughter."

"But supposing," said Ella, "that old Jones never dies, and never consents, what are you innocent turtle doves to do; die an engaged old maid, and engaged old one-armed bachelor?"

"Why, to say the truth, Ella," I answered, "I have sometimes thought over all this, and never could make head or tail of it. I should not like to be kept out of Amy for ever, or until Jones dies, which would be about the same time; and yet I see no help for it. We have been engaged now six months, and Amy is not a bit nearer being my wife than when I first saw her on our lawn."

"Ask her then," said Ella, "to marry without her father's consent. You can afford to keep a wife, and I dare say after old Jones has sworn a great deal, and Amy cried, all will come round, and the erring pair be restored to the angry father."

"Ella dear," I said seriously, "I promised Amy never to ask her to marry without her father's consent.

and also told the angry father, as you term him, that without it I would not marry his daughter; so you see I am doubly bound on that score. No, there is no help for it, I must soon return to India, and trust somehow or another to soften the heart of that inflexible old collier."

"Well I wish you may before you are sixty, but I doubt it."

Then rising from the stone on which we had been sitting, watching the sun setting red and angry over the Channel, she added, "I feel very anxious about papa, I do not think he will last many days longer; let us hurry home before it is dark."

Thus saying we started, and as there was every promise of a storm, we walked quickly to the house.

On arrival, we found my father had had some sleep and was better; so going into his room, I asked my mother to allow me to relieve her, and sitting at the bed-side took her place, on the understanding, that on the slightest sympton of relapse I was to recall her. She and her daughters appeared so tired and worn out with continued anxiety and fatigue, that I thought now the Major was a degree better, he might for a short time be trusted to my care.

The old man appeared in a sound sleep, from which I hoped he might awake refreshed and sensible. Redrawing the curtains round him, I resumed my seat on the chair at his bed-side, listening to the

howling of the wintry blast outside, and the scratching of the top boughs of the yew tree against the window pane.

The long deep roll of the distant thunder, said the the storm had burst somewhere; but with me, in that dark chamber, all was silence, my father slept on, and I watched.

As the village clock chimed out nine, he moved; and on my approaching his bed-side, asked feebly but distinctly, "who was there?"

"Philip," I replied.

"Light a candle," he said, "and tell me if you are married."

"No," I replied anxiously; "not yet; but shall I call my mother? she desired me to do so when you awoke."

"Don't just yet, I have been very ill, and things seem like a dream. Will Amy not marry you? You have not quarrelled?"

"No," I said, more anxious than ever to call my mother, for although sensible, his eyes were so unnaturally bright they frightened me. "We are still engaged, but her father won't consent."

"Ah," he said, "I wish he would. Call your mother and sisters."

I did so, saying that I feared the senses had only been collected for a few moments before death; and so it proved, for on our return to his bed-room, he was still sensible. Then raising himself slightly, he

asked his wife to kiss him, and with a blessing on his children, hardly audible, he expired in the arms of her who had ever been his true and faithful wife.

There had been some delay in finding Henry, and by the time he entered, all was over; but I repeated to him the last words our father had spoken. He was affected, and left the room with his sisters.

After drawing the curtains round, I led my trembling mother from the side of her dead husband, and joined the sorrowing circle in the dining-room. Henry had left them, and in his absence we talked together over the loss we had sustained.

CHAPTER VIII.

My father's death had been so long expected, and his recovery so completely out of probability, that neither wife nor children were so much affected as a more sudden demise would have caused. For months had he lingered, and at times suffered both bodily and mentally so acutely, that we could but look on his departure as a release to himself. In him we knew we had lost a kind parent and dear friend, but we sorrowed not as men without hope.

Our neighbours were very kind, and invitations came in for both my mother and sisters to leave the house of mourning for awhile; but this they refused to accept, until the grave should receive its victim.

Then came the funeral; and on our return the will was opened, and read by the family attorney, in whose keeping it had been placed by the Major some eight months previously.

By the wording of the will, it appeared that my father had been anxious to do justice both to his

widow and children. The money left to the girls was to be given to them either at their marriage, or at any time they might desire to live away from their mother. My mother's handsome portion was given her for the purpose of keeping up the property during her life, which, at her death, was to be sold, and the proceeds, with her jointure, were to be given in certain portions to us, her surviving children.

In mentioning the name of his son, Henry, he simply stated that he did not require any of the large sums advanced refunded; but hoped that for the future, he (Henry) would abstain from asking, and his widow refuse to give—adding, that in justice to her other children, she ought not to do so.

To Henry and myself was left a sufficient sum in the Funds, to yield us each one hundred and fifty pounds a year; to the widow, seven hundred per annum, and to each daughter, one hundred. The widow's jointure to return to the children in the following proportions, viz.: each son two hundred per annum, and the balance divided equally among the daughters. There was more about survivorship, but into this I will not enter.

There was silence after the will had been read, and the servants told of the various little legacies left to them, which continued for some moments. Suddenly the voice of Henry was heard angrily asking, "Who the executors were?" but before I could hear the reply, Ella had fainted, and I was forced, as

the only means of restoring her, to drag her into the adjoining apartment.

Here, soon after, we were joined by the mother and Jane, so, making over the now half-sensible girl to them, I returned to the dining-room, and was immediately assailed with some choice language from Henry.

"D—d fine!" said he. "So the governor makes old Davis, a d—d lawyer, and you, my younger brother, his executors! Curse his dirty hundred and fifty pounds a year, it won't keep me in cigars! and this lawyer says my mother is forbidden to give me more."

"Why, Henry," I said, vexed, but sorrowful that there should be such an exhibition over a father's will; "I was not aware of his having made me one of the executors, but being so, will do my duty. You have the same as I have, and heard the will read, which said my mother could not, in common justice to your sisters and to us all, give you more."

"And why the devil," he replied, "should you have as much as I have, and why should the mother have seven hundred a year, and the house besides? It is villainous, and there has been some underhand work!"

"There has been none that I know of," I replied, "and please speak respectfully of our late father. You have no right to receive more than I do, and shan't, if I can help it."

"Mr. Villars," said the lawyer, "I do not know what you mean by a damned lawyer, or underhand work. Your late father, fearing your extravagance, tied the money up, so that you could not injure your mother and sisters."

"Of course," said he, looking angrily at me, "you all played into each other's hands, and you may all go to the devil together, I believe there has been some infernal cheating, and I will find it out."

"There has been no cheating, Sir," said the lawyer, "and you had better not tax me with anything of the sort;" then turning towards myself and Major Davis, who had hitherto remained silent, he added, "Captain Villars, present my compliments to Mrs. Villars and your sisters, and say I shall be always glad to assist them with my advice; but that I would rather they should write, than that I should come here, as Mr. Villars, forgetting the duties of a gentleman, insults me."

"Good bye, Bremer," said old Davis, shaking hands with him, "I am very sorry that the son of my old friend should have so shamefully treated you, but I dare say we shall be able to carry on business without him;" and again shaking his hands, the lawyer departed.

"There is no use our stopping here now," said Davis to myself. "So if poor Mrs. Villars would like to see me, I will go to her."

"I wish to know," said Henry, "if between you

all and that d—d lawyer I am only to have £150 a-year."

"That is all," said Davis.

"Then perhaps you will tell me how I am to live on it."

"That you must manage for yourself," said Davis."

"I might manage if I sponged on my mother and sisters like that d—d puppy, my younger brother."

"It is lucky for you, Henry," I said, doubling my fist, "that you are my brother, or with my one arm I would give you as good a hiding as ever you had in your life. But I do not intend sponging on my mother and sisters, I leave in a couple of months for India; sufficient time, let me tell you, to arrange matters, and prevent you doing them any injury in my absence."

"At your mother's death, Sir," said Davis, "you will receive very nearly three hundred a-year more."

"Her death," said Henry, with a sneer. "That is a probable event I should think. Something to look forward to—"

"I hope you don't," I broke in.

"Hold your jaw," was the polite reply.

"Do not let there be words between you," said Davis. "It is as the Major willed, and cannot be altered."

"Humph," said Henry, pulling out the little black pipe, lighting it and going into the garden.

Davis and myself, after arranging the papers, left the room, and went to the one in which sat my mother and sisters.

There was some crying, and at first the widow could not quite see why the first born should not be better off than the second. Her only argument in its favour was, that he always had been.

"The very reason he should not be now," said Davis.

"Why should he, mamma?" said Jane, "he has always been a drag to us, and might, had he not been a coward, have had a larger income than Philip, for he would have been a Lieutenant-Colonel in the army."

"But he is not anything, dear," said my mother.

"Yes, ma'am," said Davis, "but that's his own fault, he had no end of money spent in purchasing steps for him, and could now have retired on half pay, or recovered the money by selling out."

"So," said Ella, joining in, "because Henry through cowardice lost his money and rank, we all are to suffer; I for one won't agree to his being assisted, let him do something, and the £150 will help him on."

"Quite right, Ella," said Jane, "I cannot see why Philip is to go to India and work for his bread, whilst Henry is to saunter about here quarrelling with us all, and smoking a filthy pipe all over the house."

"Now, Ma'am," added Davis, "you hear your daughters' opinion; it quite agrees with mine, as also with Philip's. As your poor husband said, in justice to your other children—for remember, your income is in trust for them—you have no right to be giving large sums to Mr. Henry. As a friend, I tell you that by so doing, you only encourage him in extravagance, and really check his making any effort to assist himself."

"I know you mean well," said my mother, weeping; "but I am afraid he might go from bad to worse; but I promise you all that none shall suffer for Henry. I will try and persuade him to do something for himself."

"Well, mother, I hope you may succeed," I said, leaving the room with Davis.

We met Henry in the hall, who said as we passed him, that he intended again going to Liverpool; and here shaking hands with my poor father's old friend. I retired to the solitude of my dressing-room.

Left to myself, I thought over the events of the past week, and the loss I had sustained in the late death. I could see plainly that between Henry and myself there could never be brotherly feeling, and that it would require the united influences of us all, to keep my kind, but weak mother, from continuing the system of advances to Henry. That small sums would be as a drop in the ocean, I knew,

even if his remark that, one hundred and fifty pounds a year would not keep him in tobacco, had not been sufficiently convincing. I dreaded the time coming for my return to India, not only because of quitting the land in which dear Amy lived; but because my departure would be the signal for Henry's return to St. Helens, and establish himself upon my mother and sisters. In reviewing my own prospects, they were none of the brightest. My means were good, certainly, far better than most officers of the Indian army, for what with my wound pension, and income, I had nearly two hundred and fifty pounds a year, independent of my pay as a Captain, which in India was about six hundred a year more. But the one object of my life, being married to Amy, was as distant as ever. I had tried everything to conciliate Mr. Jones, but without success; and now in three months I should be returning to India, leaving behind me all I loved and valued. I felt sorrowful at the prospect; and leaving my room, strolled down towards the river.

I had paced up and down some time, sheltering myself from the cold wind behind a copse of evergreens, when I was joined by Ella, who, hearing I had gone out, knew fully well, where on a cold day like this, she would be most likely to find me.

"I have just received a long kind letter from Amy," she said.

"Is it about our poor father?" I asked.

"Yes, full of it, she speaks so nicely and kindly; says she knows how much you must feel it, and begs that you will bear up. She also says, that her father had written to her about it, filling a great portion of his letter with expressions of sorrow for the loss his family would sustain, and the poor of the neighbourhood. Poor Amy has evidently been crying all over her letter, for it is dreadfully blotted, and she so often says in it that, she wishes she might write to you, and tell you how sorry she is; that I am sure this is the cause of all her tears."

"Dear Amy," I said, feeling rather choky, "I only wish we were allowed to write to each other; but how dreadful it will be when I return to India. Ella, you must write then; but now let me see her letter."

This she did; and running through its tear-blotted pages, I saw the spirit of meekness, kindness, and religion, that had first attracted me to Amy Jones.

"I will write," said Ella, breaking the silence that ensued upon my returning her the letter. "But, Philip, you can hardly tell what I would not give to see you married and out of that horrid India."

"Not so horrid, Ella," I said, "awfully hot, and somewhat unhealthy; but not a bad country for a poor man with only his wits to get on with. I shall,

of course, regret leaving you all; but it half maddens me to think of quitting Amy for ever."

"It may not be for ever," said Ella kindly, "Mr. Jones may consent, and something may occur; any way never despair, and not only for our sakes, but for hers, take care of your health on your return."

"It seems but yesterday, Ella dear," I replied, "that I saw you and that brute of a dog under the ivy, and yet two years and a half have elapsed, and how much has occurred. Here is our poor father gone, and I engaged to Amy, my promotion obtained, and that Henry still idling at home."

"Yes, Philip," she said, her beautiful eyes bright with tears, "Poor dear papa, how good and kind he was; I do not think he really ever wished harm to any one. Time has gone over, since you first said I was wooing the moon, when I was looking after your arrival, and Henry still annoying us. I promise you that when you go, he shall not make use of this house and get money out of mamma without our opposing him. I shall try to get mamma to advise him to leave the country; and Major Davis will always befriend us. Mamma thinks very highly of Major Davis, and as she knows it was poor papa's wish that Henry should not rob us, she will listen to what the Major says."

"I hope so, dear," I said, "and I shall ride over to-morrow to his house, and have a long talk on the subject."

CHAPTER IX.

NEXT day, I rode over to the Major's; and for some time we were busy in plans for Henry's settlement in life, and inventing schemes to convince my mother that it would be to the general welfare were Henry to quit the country. There was an opening, the Major thought, in Canada; and if Henry could be prevailed upon to accept it, money might be advanced, and deducted from the portion he would receive at the mother's death. This would relieve the girls of his presence, and the house of his tobacco, whilst the half-wild life of nothing to do, would suit his indolent nature.

Having settled this much, we turned to the consideration of my matters, and came to the usual conclusion that nothing but time would bring Jones round to consent.

"I think he is slightly changing," I said, "for in Amy's last letter to Ella, she says that her father seemed much to feel my poor father's death; and formerly they were not good friends."

"Sly dog, eh!" replied the Major, "get your sister to write—well, sisters are useful sometimes; but if you like, I will try him again, say you are going to India immediately, and that your happiness and hers depends on his consenting, then praise you greatly, and go security for your good behaviour."

"I should be really very much obliged if you would try once again," I said, "tell him you have known me from a boy, that I am as steady as old Time, and that I don't mind waiting for Amy if he would only fix some time. Tell him he may try me as much as he likes, and I am not afraid of failing, and that I *do* love his daughter."

"Of course you do, my boy, or you would not go beseeching at the stubborn old fellow in this way. I will do my best for you, and you know nothing would please me more than to see you happily married. Now come and have some wine, or whatever our housekeeper has going, and ride back before it is dark to St. Helens," said Major Davis.

Next day Henry went away, and I communicated to my mother and sisters the result of the previous day's conversation with Major Davis.

Both the girls thought it an excellent plan, but saw that the chief difficulty consisted in getting Henry to consent to go, and the next to keep him there if he did go. My mother, though acknowledging that it might be for Henry's benefit, could not conceal her dread of his being out of her sight;

besides, having in her youth, heard of Red Indians and war dances, she mixed them all up together in a wonderfully promiscuous manner, and came to the conclusion that Henry would be taken by Red Indians, have a war dance performed over him, and then be eaten.

"Stuff, mother," I said, "where I want him to go is quite quiet, and the people trade in furs, among the purchasers of which he would be one; and have very little to do, but shoot and enjoy himself."

"But it is very cold there, and there might be a quarrel, and he might be killed," urged my mother.

"Catch him," said Jane, "thrusting himself into danger. He is not a fighting character, and will, I feel sure, never have war dances performed over him. He likes shooting, and can buy skins, as well as anybody else I suppose."

"Like those men that buy the cat skins in Chepstow," said Ella smiling.

"It is very low employ for an officer," said my mother.

"No officer," said Ella bridling up, "I, like all women, love brave men, and hate cowards. He might have been an officer, but being a coward, is not. Out in those parts the employment is not low; but I could not help saying when I heard Jane say he could buy skins, that such was the employment of the catkillers of Chepstow."

"I rather like the idea," said Jane wickedly, "of

Henry turning collector of cat skins; but seriously speaking, think the employment is a very good one."

"What, collecting cat skins, Jane?" I asked.

"No, buying other sorts up in Canada; and as Henry likes cold, it would suit him. But how is the money to be raised?"

This I explained; and after some further talk, our mother began to think, that after all her son and heir might not be the victim of a war dance, and as he liked cold, there was nothing very dreadful in the plan proposed.

This was enough for the day, and putting on my hat, I went on escort duty with the girls, whose visits to the old women of the parish had been lately much curtailed, and were now to be renewed.

A few days elapsed before Henry's answer could be received, but this, to our great joy, proved favourable; he stating in his laconic manner that, "Being tired of England, he would as soon go and shoot in Canada as elsewhere."

The reply I took over with me to Major Davis, as I wished him, as one of the executors and my father's oldest friend, to give Henry to understand that this was no shooting excursion, but a settlement for life, and that the money now advanced would be deducted hereafter. For Henry to well consider before he took it, was my anxious wish, and I dreaded his returning to England with a story, making out that he had been deceived.

"I will take good care of that," said Davis, "for I am not likely to let him have the money for a shooting excursion, so don't fret yourself about that. If he chooses to return and live on your mother, of course he can if she asks him, but the money advanced would perhaps induce him to do something for himself; and even looking upon it in the worst light, it would give Jane and Ella something to go on, or tax him with, should he come back."

"Why that fellow has no shame," I replied. "He would not care a farthing about being taxed by Jane and Ella with sponging, so long as my mother said nothing. I wish we could bind him down to remain a certain time away."

"Pshaw! binding him," said Davis, "very likely. I trust much more to the life suiting him. There are lots of old army men about there; and provisions being cheap, he can live like a fighting cock. You leave Henry to me, he will not listen to you; as naturally he will not listen to a younger brother, I answer for it that Henry goes, and as far as I can judge, does not come back as poor as he left. He will at least learn independence, and this once instilled into a man, makes him more capable of undergoing the vicissitudes of life."

"I hope so," I said, "but I cannot think well of Henry; from my childhood he has never behaved well, and was always overbearing and cold hearted.

However, the experiment is worth trying, and for my sisters' sake I shall be right glad if it succeeds. If he comes back to St. Helens, I am sure Jane and Ella will leave their mother and set up for themselves; they are well enough off to do so, and I would give them money rather than they should submit to be insulted by Henry."

"Their wish to do so, should he return, will be the best bond towards making Mrs. Villars do her duty, so now away with Henry and all connected with him. I wanted to see you, and so your coming over is most opportune. I received an answer to my praise bespattered letter about you from Jones," said the Major.

"Did you," I asked anxiously, "and what did he say?"

"Why much as before; but you can see his letter. He certainly thinks better of you than he did, and speaks in a kinder manner, but still he seems to thoroughly object to the match, and will not consent. He evidently approves of you as a son, but not as a son-in-law. You will see that he says, 'I know young Villars to be a good son, and loving as he does, and can love, I know he must feel his father's death most acutely,' but he goes on to say, that that is no reason that he should consent to your marrying Amy; and as to your altered circumstances, and future prospects, he quite pooh pooh's them, by saying that his daughter

requires no fortune in her husband. Altogether, my dear boy, I see no brighter prospects before you than formerly. I have read his letter over twice, and can only see a slight melting, but still a steady determination to never consenting."

I did not very distinctly hear all the Major said, for I was busy in the perusal of the letter, which he had that day received from Jones. By its contents I saw that he was certainly softening, but as the Major said, was as far off from giving his consent as ever. I felt again foiled, and in no very happy frame of mind, refusing the invitation to dinner, I ordered my horse and rode home.

It was a long wet ride; but I felt no inclination to hurry or in any way to interrupt the thread of mental amusement. There I sat in the drizzling rain, buried in my griefs; and only aroused from them to kick the old hunter for an occasional trip. How I introduced plan after plan into my mind, in the hopes, that through one of them, I might, ere I went to India, induce Mr. Jones to change his mind; but none appeared feasible, and the only result of all this cogitation was, a thorough good soaking before I reached home; and next day a slight touch of the old Indian ague and fever.

Two days after this, Henry returned from Liverpool, to have as he called it, "a jaw about this going to Canada." As Davis had told me to leave the management of all to him, I answered

but few of his questions, simply stating that it was Major Davis' proposal, and that to me it appeared a very good opening.

Henry was evidently anxious to go, and as none of us wished to balk his inclination, there was very little delay in acquainting old Davis with his arrival; with a request from my mother that he would come over to dinner, and do as he usually did, occupy the blue bed-chamber, as was termed a very fusty, haunted-looking bed-room, leading off the first landing place, and which was a special favourite with the old Indian.

After dinner and the ladies had retired, the three of us talked over the going to Canada, and the Major gave so glowing a description of its joys and indolence, that Henry almost wished to start away at once. He was made to fully understand that the money now advanced would be deducted hereafter, and that to return before giving the thing a fair trial would be considered disgraceful. Having settled all this satisfactorily, we adjourned to tea in the drawing-room, and Henry himself was the first to inform his mother, that it was his intention to be off as quickly as possible.

"I have nothing to say against it," said my mother, looking at Davis, fearing that she might say something that would not be correct. "I hope you will like it, and buy skins well; but you can shoot, you know, and not catch cold."

"Humph," said Henry, not quite understanding my mother's reply, "I can shoot, of course, and buy skins, as you call it, swap things for them, I call it, I dare say. But won't you all be jolly when I go?"

This question was so suddenly put, that all were taken aback; but seeing that he expected to be answered, and that any delay in doing so would only arouse his suspicious nature, and make him think this was but a plot to get rid of him, I replied immediately, "That, considering his behaviour, neither I nor my sisters would fret much at his departure, for he had never been decently civil to any of us."

"Don't throw pearls before swine," said he in reply. "One great joy to me in going, is leaving you three. As for my mother, if she chooses to be guided by you all, I shan't care about leaving her too."

I did not reply, though somewhat vexed at being mixed up with the swine. I feared that anything I might say would prevent his going, which was still evidently his intention. Ella, however, had less command over herself, and calling him "a scamp," said she looked forward to the day of his departure with longing.

"And what do you say, Jane?" said Henry, turning to her.

"Very much the same as Ella. It is very wicked of you, Henry, to go on as you do; you care for

nobody, and think every one is to give way to you," answered Jane, half inclined to cry.

"Thank you both; and as young puppy here," pointing to me, "seems to govern you all, I shall go as quickly as possible. Good night; and Major Davis, as soon as you can let me have the money I am ready to be off."

"It shall be forthcoming, and lodged, as I told you, for your use in Canada. Remember, beyond outfit, and passage paid by Mrs. Villars, you will have to bear your own expenses. The large sum, you will receive through agents at various periods after arrival."

"I understand," said he, shutting the door.

My mother seemed uneasy, but said nothing; as for the Major and ourselves we made no scruple in criticising Henry's bad behaviour and want of heart. I inwardly hoped that this was the last we should see of him, and said so to them all as we parted for the night.

Henry did not come down to breakfast next day, preferring it in bed; and as the Major wished to return, I rode over with him before lunch. On my return to St. Helens, I was told that Henry had gone; and that after saying good bye very coldly to my mother, and scarcely at all to his sisters, had given them some of his mind regarding the whole house, but myself in particular. On being told by

Ella that I was out, and that, perhaps, it would be better for him to wait until I returned, he informed her that he had seen enough of me, and of her also, and that he trusted never to see any of us again. With these kind sentiments towards the family, he lit the dirty black pipe, and drove away towards Chepstow.

A few days were necessary for arrangements to be made in outfit, selling out the necessary money, and signing legal documents. These all being completed, Mr. Henry sailed one bright cold morning for New York.

CHAPTER X.

NOTWITHSTANDING the busy month we had had, Ella or Jane could always find time to correspond with Amy; whilst she, poor girl, shewed by her letters in return, how she felt the near approach of my departure for India. Like myself, she saw no hope for it but patience, and as a year's trial had proved we loved each other dearly, each felt that firm trust in the other, without which, marriage is but the high road to misery.

As I had much to do in town, I left St. Helens early in the spring, intending to return there to see them all once again a few days before I quitted England for India; but made arrangements with Ella to let me know constantly how affairs progressed with Amy.

As my business was nearly completed in town, my passage taken, and but little remaining to do, I determined on seeking a personal interview with Mr. Jones, whom I knew to be at that time in London, and endeavour to get his consent to our marriage;

but if not that, to be allowed to say farewell to Amy.

After his repeated requests for my not bothering him again on the subject, I felt somewhat awkward in preferring this last request; but knowing that it would be the only opportunity I ever should have, and the circumstances were peculiar, I overcame any hesitation I might feel, and ordered the cabman to drive to Park Lane.

With my card I sent up a note, saying that as I was to leave for India in a few days, I wished a few moments' private conversation, and that if he would grant me such, I was either willing to wait, or call again at such hour as he should appoint.

After a few moments' delay, the servant reappeared, and inviting me into the study, I found myself face to face with the inexorable Jones.

"I am not at home to anybody," said Mr. Jones to the servant, as he closed the door upon us. Then turning towards me, he said in a kinder voice than formerly, "Captain Villars, be seated."

During these few moments, I had an opportunity of scanning his face and figure. I observed that there was much alteration in the man since I had last seen him. Age now began to leave its mark upon him; and in place of his former overbearing, blustering manner, he was grave and almost civil.

"Mr. Jones," I began, "I hope that I may not be considered intruding, or adding willingly to any

vexation you may feel on account of my engagement with your daughter; but I leave in a very few days for India, and heaven only knows whether I may ever return. That I love her dearly, and that she returns my love, I need not now repeat; but before I leave these shores, I have determined on one last effort to obtain your consent to our union. As regards my means, owing to my poor father's death, I am not penniless, and at my mother's demise must come in for more. All I ask you, Sir, is to consent, or even say you agree to our being married some day."

"Captain Villars," replied the member balancing the paper knife, "I doubt not your affection for Amy, and will own I think better of you than I used to do. Your behaviour to your poor father has not been lost upon me, or has your conduct with regard to this engagement. As regards money, you have I have no doubt enough for yourself, but very little to marry upon; but that is not the question. My daughter will not require money with her husband. I have told you before, I will not consent, nor will I now. I wish you well in India."

"But, Mr. Jones," I said, "you own you think better of me, and that you care not for my poverty; then why may I ask do you continue to make both your daughter and myself unhappy."

"I deny Amy's unhappiness," he said, "and I will never consent."

"I have then one favour yet to ask," I continued,

"may I see her? Mr. Jones, remember we may now be parting for ever, you know as well as I do, that Amy loves me dearly, and we may never meet again. In after years, you may have to reproach yourself for not granting even this much. Surely you cannot desire to increase your daughter's misery, and perhaps your own."

"Have you never seen her since you met in this house?" asked Mr. Jones.

"No, never; I promised her not to oppose your wishes—"

"You have not kept your promise then," interrupted the member.

"I have," I said colouring; "I have never seen her, and only know of her welfare through my sisters."

"The old spirit, eh!" said Jones, "you oppose me now, in continuing the engagement you oppose me, and in letting even your sisters write you oppose me."

"Sir, Mr. Jones," I replied, quietly. "If to try by all fair means to obtain your consent—if to hear about one for whom my affection knows no limit, and for whom I am willing to brave all taunts, and sacrifice even hope, is evading my promise, than I have done so. But in the promise given, I meant neither by word or deed to injure you or your's; this I think I have done, and never under your taunts or sarcasms, have I forgotten that you were

Amy's father, and as such to be respected by me."

"What good would arise from your seeing Amy? it could but revive that foolish affection, that I hope has left Amy, and will ere long leave you," replied Mr. Jones, the muscles of his face quivering, and making his countenance look troubled and sad.

"All good," I replied; "even if it is only to say farewell; but believe me, Mr. Jones, when I say my affection is, and ever will be unchanged; and without fear, I say the same regarding your daughter's."

"Stuff!" replied Jones, thoughtfully.

"Were you ever loved, Mr. Jones? Did you ever love?" I asked.

The old man winced, but recovering himself, added, "I was never romantic in my life. But as you are never likely to meet again, you may see her to say good bye. When do you leave?"

"By the mail of the 20th," I replied.

"Then come here on the afternoon of the 19th, and Amy shall see you; and now, good morning," said Mr. Jones.

"Good morning," I replied, and held out my hand, feeling almost a regard for him; "and let me add, Mr. Jones, that even for this favour I feel indebted to you. I trust yet some day you may not think me unworthy."

"Good morning, Sir," said Jones, ringing the bell. "Go to India and forget her."

"Never," I said, following the servant down the magnificent hall.

That evening I was in the mail train for Chepstow.

My week at St. Helens was but a melancholy one. Both Jane and Ella were much concerned at my going; and from our having been so much together during my furlough, and from the fact of the part they had had to play in this my engagement to Amy, the bond of union was closer knit than is often the case between near relations. My mother, also, felt much losing me, as now that Henry had gone, she was happier, and knew that I had all through only acted for the general good. Amy wrote daily to the girls long letters full of hopes and fears. The promised interview had been communicated to her by her father; and she evidently thought that by his granting this much, he might be induced to give his consent to our engagement, if not marriage. Of hope I had none, and when I told the girls of the result of my interview with Mr. Jones, they had very little either. Mr. Jones had yielded, partly because I had mentioned the word misery, as applicable to the state of his daughter, whom I knew he loved dearly, and also from knowing that most probably we should never meet again.

A dreadful day was the 18th, and towards the afternoon tearing myself from the arms of my poor

mother and loving sisters, I rode away to the railway station, taking good old Major Davis' house en route.

The old man was much affected, wished me well, and promised in my absence to watch my interests at St. Helens, and not to forget mentioning me always at The Elms. Then wringing my hand, he forced upon me a Bank of England note, for a large amount, saying as he banged the door behind him, "God bless you, boy, if ever you want another, you know where to come."

"Your ticket, Sir," said the guard, on my arrival at the Paddington station, awaking me from a long melancholy train of thoughts, which had continued through all the changes from Chepstow upwards. I slept but little that night in the stuffy, sooty, noisy little room, selected as mine at Hatchett's; and after pale ale and mutton chops for lunch, ordered a cab, and in a few minutes was once again at Park Lane.

CHAPTER XI.

"AMY, darling," said I, seeing her alone in the drawing-room, "has Mr. Jones consented, or must we bid farewell for ever?"

Her tears and sobs told me more eloquently than words, that there was no hope; and I felt almost sorrowful, that in once asking the dear girl before me to be my wife, it should have entailed so much anxiety to us both. Amy was altered, one year of incessant hoping against hope had robbed her cheek of bloom, and made her look anxious and care-worn. Still there was the dear, pleasing smile, the loving eye and elegant figure. She looked older, and more womanly; but perceiving that I was mentally noticing the change, she said with somewhat of her former gay laugh, "But, Philip dear, we must make him give in."

"Heaven bless you, darling," was my reply, kissing her pallid lips. "I wish we may, but I despair, I have tried; and although he owns to not dislike me

so much as formerly, he said almost solemnly that he would never consent. Is he at home?"

"Yes," she replied, "but told me he gave us an hour together, at the end of which time he would join us."

"What are we to do, Amy?" I asked.

"I cannot tell, hope on; perhaps he may relent. But your going to India is what I dread, so far away, and I know the climate is not suited to you. Dear, dear Philip, God forgive me, but I have at times felt inclined to dare my father's anger, and leave him for ever."

"Would you?" I asked, "and marry me?"

"No, dear one, I am his only daughter, and know that to marry without his consent, would cause a quarrel that no time would repair, and that my leaving him would break his heart."

"Well, Amy, I look up to you in everything, and though the sufferer by such determination, cannot but admire you for it. For your sake, dear one, I will take care of myself in India, and when miles divide us, can be happy in the thought that by you I am loved and prayed for."

"Philip," said she, whilst her eyes glistened with tears. "To me, your going to India is an awful thing, for I tremble to think that in that dread climate you may find a grave. You are even yet not strong, and are ill suited to undergo exposure; so for my sake, for your dear sisters' sake, try by

every means to keep your health. But I cannot oppose your going; I have seen throughout all that has occurred, that papa has thought you inclined to be idle, and never imagines that your health was such as to require so long a leave of absence. I know the contrary, even had not that illness at St. Helens proved it to me. Now let him see by a persistance in the line of conduct you have carried out so well, and in a steady determination to do your duty, that you are capable of even making him like you, and perhaps one day of consenting to our union."

"I will, Amy," I answered passionately. "I renew that promise given to you in this room, twelve months ago, never by word or deed to injure your father, and to be faithful to you for ever; and, Amy, in return may I hope that come what may, through evil report or good report, you remain steadfast to me. I doubt you not, dear one; had I done so, your conduct during the whole past year would have dispelled anything of the sort. Write through my sisters, and through them you shall hear of me. God knows what my fate away may be, I may sink into an early grave, I may rise to honour and renown, whichever it may be, to you, my wife, I remain faithful and true."

"To you, Philip Villars, I will be steadfast and true," said Amy, her voice clear and steady.

"Now," said I, "dearest Amy I feel happier.

On your father's entering, shall I tell him the result of this conversation, should he demand it?"

"He is not likely to demand it. He trusts me and I think you, also, implicitly. He is aware of my writing to your sisters, and has never forbidden it. He knows then the yoke would be more than I could bear. I will ask him before you to consent. Should he withhold it still, then when far away know that Amy Jones marries none but you."

"Bless you!" was all I could say, for admiration for the handsome girl before me kept me silent, and then came a knock at the door.

"It is papa," said Amy, rising, and then adding, "come in papa," the door was opened; and in the elderly man with haggard face, that entered, I saw the once burly member for Newport.

"Papa," said Amy, taking his hand. "Captain Villars is now going to India, and we may be separated for ever. I tell you before him, that we are resolved to continue the engagement; now do please consent. I—your daughter ask."

"Never," said Jones, huskily.

"I only want you, Sir," said I, "to consent to our engagement, and one day let us be married."

"You are of age, and if both of you like to be fools enough to tie yourselves up, I have not the power to forbid or prevent it. I only say, with my consent you shall never be married; and if Amy

marries without it, may a father's direst curse light upon her."

"Very good then, Sir," I replied. "There is nothing to be gained by my remaining here longer. Without your consent your daughter shall never marry me. Good bye."

"Good bye, Captain Villars," said the member.

"And, Amy, my own one, good bye; before your father, I repeat, that you, and you only will I marry. God bless you!"

I required no servant to shew me the way out, I was anxious to reach the open air. The sobs of Amy, and the indistinctly pronounced words "and bless you too!" were not for the footman's ears.

My last night in England was spent in a very unsatisfactory manner, chiefly in wandering up and down Oxford Street, unsettled in my mind as to whether I would take the early train on the morrow, and start for Southampton, or delay three days longer, to see if Jones might relent; and should he not, then to go viâ Marseilles, and overtake the Southampton tub at Malta.

Desiring the chambermaid to call me at six, I fell off to sleep still undetermined how to act. But on rising in the morning, I came to the conclusion that Jones was very unlikely to change his mind; and that one of his great objections to me was that he fancied I was idle, and the longer I delayed in England the more convinced he would be that his

impression was correct. Putting all these things together, I resolved to start at once; and by twelve o'clock of that day, I was one of one hundred passengers, all taking a last look of their native land, as we steamed past the Needles.

CHAPTER XII.

Before entering the Bay, all the wonderful array of overland trunks, brass tipp'd boxes, deal cases, iron chairs, and tarred ropes had been put away; and people had began to find acquaintances.

For myself, I was in no humour to find out anybody, and felt a sort of malicious pleasure in seeing the stout elderly men, evidently fussy, pompous majors; and the scraggy, sour-looking, no longer youthful women, evidently calculating mothers, all rushing down below to be very sick at their leisure.

As the sea got rougher, so did the passengers become fewer on deck. Some few pale ones remained until the last moment, resolved to prove that they were not sick, but first one retired, then another, until only the seasoned ones were left. Among these I was, and lighting a cigar, joined a group of men talking India.

It was the old story; very sick, and all, or almost all very bad for the first day or two, then an improvement; and by the time we rounded Cape

Trafalgar, sea-sickness was spoken of with contempt, and the possessor of such a malady as a most despicable wretch.

In Egypt, part of the railroad had saved us the annoyance of that horrible Nile boat; and then once again came the vans, with the wild fun of the trip across the Desert. Now the dirty hotel at Suez, the deep blue of the sea, and awful heat of an Oriental steamer. One fortnight more, and I found myself at the post office in Calcutta seeking for letters. There were at least a dozen, some from tailors asking for employ, some from brother officers, and one from Ella. This I afterwards found out I ought to have received at Malta, viâ Marseilles, but having missed me had been sent on to Calcutta.

Returning to Spence's, I was soon buried in Ella's letter. She enclosed a short note from Amy to her, giving an account of our meeting in London; and detailing events two days later. By these, I saw that had I stayed in town until the 23rd, no good would have resulted, and that old Jones was not the least likely to give way. Amy evidently wrote in bad spirits, and was very unhappy at my departure; still, throughout her letter ran a vein of hope which I was pleased to see. Ella herself wrote in good spirits, saying, she thought after all, my returning to India was the best thing for both parties, and concluded by saying, that they had seen in the papers that the steamer had arrived with Henry in

New York, but that the "cat skin man" had not written.

After tearing up the affectionate welcomes of tailors, I opened those coming from Waller and Morris. They told me that there was nothing doing, intensely hot, and not a house to be had. If I joined quickly, Morris said, I should probably be appointed Interpreter, as there was no qualified subaltern, and, as far as he knew, none studying. "For," added he, "men now-a-days will not take the trouble of studying hard at three languages for two years to get the interpretership, when the adjutancy is the best paid of the two, and only requires a man to pass the little go; besides all the civil appointments up here, are given indiscriminately to men whether they have passed the P. or the PH., and to men of a certain standing, who never did pass at all; so if you get it, you are not likely to lose it again for the next two years."

Waller wrote somewhat the same, offering me a room in his very little house, which he had had to build on the regiment being sent there from Lahore. "I wish," he wrote, "I could offer you more accommodation, but building is ruinous here; and I could not afford to build much more than a hovel with a verandah round it; and yet it cost me over £300, which I had to borrow. There is not," he continued, "a house to be let, all for sale and awfully dear; so perhaps you would like to come and try your hand

once again at brick and mortar, and see if, as a captain, you are as soon ruined by it as when a subaltern."

Before going out to report my arrival, I answered them both; applying to Dunderhead, the Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the regiment, for the vacant interpretership, and closing my epistle to Stumps with a long tirade on the system that gave hutting money and an allowance to native officers and Sepoys, and yet never advanced one penny to the European officers, who were now, from the frequent changes of cantonments and the inevitable building of houses, as a body, deeply involved and fairly on for ruin.

It always has appeared to me a most invidious distinction to make between the native officers and men, and the European superior. Often have I been asked by Sepoys, why the Government give to a subadar thirty-seven rupees to build a hut that they know does not cost him twenty, and yet neither give nor lend one anna to the white officer; although they know that few, if any of them, have anything but their pay, and that they must borrow at ruinous interest, from either natives or a bank, to save themselves from the almost certain death that exposure to the hot winds and rains would entail should they not build.

I could not tell them why it was, and why many other things were given to them; such as extra pay

when marching, tents found and carried for them, and six months' leave of absence almost every two years; to say nothing of their home remittances being at sight, and their officers' drafts being always at ten days. But with all Europeans, I thought that it was not improbable that the white man, being away from his own country, was not dangerous; and that from where he came from, there were plenty more, equally good, should he dislike the service.

That the Sepoys were not so blind but that they could see that certain concessions were made to them, I knew; but whether they reasoned so far, as to observe that by the difference made between them and their officers, fear was displayed, I shall not stop to inquire. If we, the governors of India, were not afraid of those we governed, why I must say the system pursued towards all natives looked very much like it. As far as I can judge, the only person put upon was the poor ryot, who paid the bill, and was victimised by those devils in human form, native civil officials; and, occasionally, native Christians and half-castes were sufferers, whose every trifling fault was magnified, brought to light, and made the subject of judicial inquiry.

The chuprassies, burkandazes, omlahs, ameens, *et hoc genus omne* attached to civil courts, being always Mussulmen, or high caste Hindoos, were not likely to lose opportunities of shewing their zeal and bigotry by dragging before the Huzoor every erring

convert to Christianity, or frequently the guiltless but friendless ryot, whose crime consisted in not bribing high enough.

I found all the same as when, three years before, I had gone to report my departure. Here sat the kind-hearted paymaster, still, as ever, willing to assist one through the mysteries of red tape, and enable pay to be obtained. The white ant-eaten records lay still in heaps on the shelves in the lower room, fusty and odoriferous. Up the stairs, and the essence of greasy baboo rose high above other dreadful compounds. Now the wretched dumdummer, or palkee on wheels, stopped at the Adjutant-General's quarters, and the white uniformed Sepoy sentry, with bayonet in hand, said he was within. Again came essence of baboo, and the great bashaw informed you that there were no orders awaiting your arrival. On once more, and you are told by a gentlemanly, soldier-like man, smoking a silver hookah, at the same time that he offers you a cheroot, that "there are no orders for you;" and after some general talk on English politics, the Russian war, how hot it is, and the cholera, on you go to leave a card at Government House. More white uniforms and salutes, and as you drive under the arched gateway, from the top heavily flops away a long-legged adjutant, perching himself immediately on some house near.

There was little to induce me to stay at Calcutta. The heat was intense, and the place, dullness per-

sonified. Sometimes I would ride on a hired brute —whose hard mouth made me feel the heat more than ever—down the course, and observe the equipages and people; the first, handsome—and the latter, nothing in particular. Here and there the bright rosy face of an English girl shewed she was a recent importation, and that a few weeks would make her as pale and languid-looking as the elegant, sickly article at her side. Some of the handsomest turnsout, both in the cab and carriage way, I saw belonged either to natives, or to half castes. Of Mr. Rosarios there were dozens; and dusky Venuses, all white muslin and pink bonnets, thousands. Now came galloping along over the turf a body of six—two red coats, two black, and two noisy, happy, palefaced girls. The attention to them is pretty equally divided by the three gentlemen; the elder and stouter being evidently the father, whose happiness seems only to consist in seeing his daughters happy, and hot though the exercise makes him, still he feels it not, for is not the youthful figure at his side saying, "Let us gallop, papa."

Darker gets the tropical night, and homewards we all turn; those living in the Fort take the road to the right, answering the challenges of the sentries, as their carriage wheels awake the echoes, and make mimic thunder on the drawbridges. Then a flash, and the rippling of the Hooghly is silenced for a moment as the nine o'clock gun roars out the hour.

Once more the table-d'hôte at Spence's, iced soda water and hock, dinner, cheroots, and to gasp the short night through, either under a punkah or mosquitoe curtains.

Again came the old familiar words, "your tickets, gentlemen," as we started for Ranee Gunge; and there after some six hours of the most comfortable railway travelling in the world, in the most comfortable of carriages, I found myself.

The place was not inviting; indeed, it appeared to me as if the terminus had ended nowhere. A large stucco built station-house empty, its only occupant appearing to be a little jet black Mheteranee, who flitted like a black moth from room to room.

All round was a wilderness of sand, hot and bare. In rear of this glaring, awful house, I discovered a man—and from him acquired the information, that in a tent near, some dinner was obtainable, and also that the carriages of the North-west Dak Company would take me on to Peshawur if I wished.

I gave directions for one to be made ready, and entered the tent for some dinner, discovering the host among some straw and bottles, very busy cursing the railway people for charging him two rupees for the carriage of a few pounds of bacon.

A sickly tough fowl having been caught, was killed, and eaten, all within half-an-hour; then having the carriage well provided with beer, brandy, biscuits, and cheroots, away I started for the

Punjaub, just as the intensely hot May sun sunk below the yellow horizon.

All that night we galloped on, changing horses every six miles. Down the low hills we rushed at a pace good even for England in its palmy coaching days. Now turn a precipitous corner sharply, the strange vehicle sways for a moment, and seems unsettled as to whether it should turn over or go on. Again is seen that great roaring sun, looking hotter even than when parted with the night before. Now we pass groups sitting or sleeping by the way side. Here beneath this spreading prepul, smoke a dozen dark eyed men, talking in whispers, and glancing suspiciously from beneath the shade of their huge turbans or greasy hair. Now are horsemen armed from head to foot, their wiry vicious looking cattle, all fretting as the rider's hand tightens the rein, and with his armed heel presses the animal to caper as the Englishman passes.

Now in parties of eight or ten are Sepoys, some in uniform, and all respectfully saluting as they are passed. Then the harsh horn says there is something before us on the road, and for us room must be left. We pass them, strings of heavy wheeled carts, the bullocks staggering under the weight of bales of cotton.

Oh, how hot it is! The very crows gasp open-mouthed on the sweet smelling mowah trees near; but there is no help for it, the Staging Bungalow is

yet ten miles away. Now the white-eyed screw just put into shafts refuses to move, and half feverish you are forced to jump out of the carriage to avoid going with it down the sloping bank, on which the road is raised. In another moment, the carriage is got upon the road uninjured, and the screw galloping at racing pace, the driver yelling; and the traveller having at the risk of his neck scrambled in as he best could, proceeds; now another change of horses, and suddenly we see in a sort of square field or compound, at the end of a straggling village, a bungalow. "Yih hai," (this is it), says the driver as he pulls up opposite the thatched, green venetianed house, all fleas and filth, called Dak Bungalow, and you feel that one night's carriage dak is done.

In the same manner and by the same means I went upwards daily. Once again I saw Benares, scene of my griffinhood and Haines, then Allahabad; the wretched bungalow still in existence, dirty as ever. On still to Cawnpore, filled with small pox and natives; its large Mahomedan population scowling at the passing Christian, and though of all creeds the most cringing and servile before the white faced man in authority—behind his back, the bigot, and cruel task master, and never forgetting that once this land belonged to him.

With the morning of the sixth day, against the bright hot sky, I saw the tall minarets of Delhi; then over the creeking, heaving bridge of boats, and

under the city wall, through the Chandnee Chook with its gilded temples, marble palaces, haughty Moslems and bold-faced women. Here to my right, rose in massive beauty, graceful and light, the red and white Jumna Mussjid. How light and beautiful looked those red minarets against the deep blue eastern sky. Its marble steps are hidden with turbanned masses, these are returning from their salutations to the prophet. "Ay Ullah, el Ullah, Mahumud Russool Ullah," sounds high above all noises, and I passed on. Yet another delay, it is caused by a cavalcade of elephants and camels loaded with stores for us, the Christian conquerors, whose magazine is beneath the palace windows of the white-headed idiot king; and as the sun rises I pass through the Cashmere gate, and ere long, am *en route* for Kurnaul.

CHAPTER XIII.

HERE the carriage was changed for the old fashioned palkee or dooly; that everlasting Matabanga not yet having been bridged or reduced to obey orders, and observe but one channel, so now I proceeded but slowly; hot and dusty was the road, and slow did progress appear after the carriage dak. When at the Staging Bungalow how fast things appeared to recur to my memory. Here it was more than ten years ago, that myself, Trevor, and poor Famine had been detained, and took into our service the Excellent Christian man, Francis. Things looked much the same as then, houses somewhat more dilapidated, perhaps, and fewer natives about. Having little to do until sunset, when I should start again, I looked over the old go-down attached to the bungalow, hoping that I might find there some remnant of our things, left behind at the Good Christian's recommendation; but beyond a few half eaten palanquins and empty water pots, there was nothing. Again I thought I would

send for the head-man and examine him on the subject; but of course he knew nothing, had only been a government servant for four years, and being the personification of honesty, only wished he knew what had become of the old khansaman, for the missing articles.

The long hot day ended at last, and on I went borne in my oven on the reeking shoulders of four men. Oh, the miseries of a dooly or palanquin, in a hot night in May. The little air coming in through the opened doors, is poisoned by the smell arising from the flaring torch; without which (though white with moonlight, is the tropical night), the steaming, half-naked men around, insist on not being able to move.

Umballah, an oasis in the desert, is reached, first are seen some wretched stucco-covered temples; then among the prickly, thin-leafed Baubul trees, rise up small bungalows; further on the good roads and mango trees say that cantonments are near, and then with a demand for "buxis" and a "bheaut ghurrum hai," or, it is dreadfully hot, Sir, is the half-dead Englishman made aware that another stage has been got over.

Two nights more of these horrors, and from the waste of sand around, rises the fort and town of Loodiana. The bungalow full as ever, and haunted with Cashmerees, who have sought refuge in our territories from the tyranny of the purchaser of their country. A wash, and a cup of tea after arrival, help to

restore my faculties; and after a breakfast of the usual grilled sudden death, or fowl, caught, killed and eaten within the hour, I felt inclined to see what things were suited as remembrances for those far away.

From towelling to Cashmere shawls was exhibited for sale, and so after much wrangling, great heat, and dreadful noise, I selected some of both, with the addition of worked Cashmere slippers. The first articles useful for myself, and the others as presents to Amy and the girls. Again the blazing sun sunk, and the dreadful masal was lighted; smell, heat, and quarrel, and away I am jolted across the Sutlej river for Jullundur. The boom of the morning gun awakes me from an uneasy slumber, and the disagreeable word "buxis," said in my ear by a semi-savage, restores me to the reality of my position. On the horizon, but fast getting indistinct in the brighter light of day, appears the glorious Hymalayah, their snowy points gilded with the rising sun. Now past me rushes, at fourteen miles an hour, a queer-looking, strongly-made cart upon two wheels; it is something like a very clumsy dog-cart, has two men on the box, and is dragged by two wild-looking horses, abreast of each other, one in the shafts, and the other dragging at a gallop from the outside. It is the mail cart, and the two cut-throat, powerful, hairy men on the box, are Sikhs, men of the country. I am now in the Punjaub. How wearisome appears *the road,* knee deep in dust, not a tree, not a bush

to break the monotony of the sandy plain, and how fearful feels the heat! It is indeed hot and stifling, and hardly to be borne. Once more "buxis," and I am put down before the Dak bungalow door.

Water to wash with first, is the reply to the opium-eating, sensual-looking khansaman; and then discharging the palkee bearers until sunset, (of course they object to the amount of the "buxis,") I wash, dress, peruse the book of names and facetious remarks, and write refusals to the half dozen notes sent over from men in cantonments, asking me to come to them.

Two more nights of this, and worn out, feverish, and dirty, I arrived at Hassanpore. Here, on a sandy plain, amongst several little flat-roofed, mud-built houses, I discovered the one owned by Waller; and as that gentleman happened to be at parade on my arrival at sunset, I took the liberty of ordering every thing for myself, not forgetting devilled biscuits and coffee. Then a good wash and a cheroot, and I was ready for the reception of my little stout friend on his return from his duties.

"Sahib ayah," (has the gentleman come?) I heard, and throwing himself from his charger, the good-natured Stumps was shaking my hand.

After congratulations on my general appearance, and questions as to whether his servants had given me everything, he proposed that I should accompany him to mess; and at once we walked over, find-

ing the usual amount of officers at their usual morning's amusements, viz., reading the newspapers, drinking coffee, smoking cheroots, and settling the affairs of the nation.

My advent raised a shout among those that recognized me, the first to do so being Morris. Then came introductions to the younger officers; and strangers; questions innumerable, countless cheroots; and Morris, Waller and myself, returned to the Adjutant's quarters for a bath and breakfast.

"Villars," said Morris at breakfast, "I am so glad to see you back again. I declare I have been half a dozen times nearly resigning the service; for I do not much care for the young hands—I am too old for them I fancy—and things go on so badly in the regiment, that I am disgusted."

"Stumps," I said, addressing Waller. "This is your fault—"

"Is it?" he replied quickly. "I should like to see any regiment get on well under Dunderhead; as for me, although Adjutant I am a cypher, and that blackguard Havildar Major everything. He and I—that is Dunderhead—hardly speak now; and to spite me, because I will not resign the Adjutancy, he makes me go to him in this broiling sun every day, in my uniform, buckled up to the chin, at twelve o'clock for orders."

"It does not seem to make you thinner," I observed. "But why does he want you to resign *the Adjutancy*?"

"Because I brought that pet villain of his, the Havildar Major, to a court-martial—because I supported the Sergeant-Major in a row there was on hospital matters—because Major Morris here likes me—and lastly because a sneaking young fool that joined soon after you left, is anxious to get it, and in him Dunderhead thinks he will find the slave he wants. The old fool," added Stumps, getting eloquent on his wrongs, "never has any orders to give me; always answering my questions by saying 'there are no orders, Sir.' Then he never has a parade, being such an idiot at it, as not to be able even to put the regiment into column; and will not allow Morris, or any of his juniors to have the regiment out under them, because to use his words, 'the men are made unsteady.' This is the way to ruin a regiment; neither officers nor men do anything. None of the younger officers could, I believe, put the regiment through one manœuvre; not from positive ignorance, but from nervousness in never being called up to try, or even sent to parade to learn how it is done."

"What a shame," I said, "and yet the people at head-quarters make this fellow write them confidential reports; and in them he can say any lie or abuse he likes against any junior officer, and perhaps ruin his prospects, when the writer is incapable of giving an opinion at all on the qualifications of any officer."

"As to that," said Morris, "I think the head-quarter people know the old fools, and treat their confidential reports with great contempt. Were it not so, do you think Waller would not, long ago, have been removed from the Adjutancy; for I'll bet a guinea that Dunderhead has more than once reported our stout friend here, as everything that is abominable?"

"Probably," I replied, "but what a pity it is that such men as these should be allowed to obtain command. How about my affairs. Am I to have the Interpretership?"

"Waller spoke to the Colonel," said Morris, "and was told it was no affair of his, and that when your application came, it would be attended to. Two days after your application came, and your note to me; so putting on my uniform I went over to him, and asked him to forward it on to head-quarters, saying that when I commanded the regiment, you had acted as Interpreter. All I got for my pains, was to be told that I did not command it now, and so I retired from the angry old gentleman's presence."

"Thanks, Major," I said, "but I shall go over with Stumps, after breakfast, report my arrival, and ask him to put me in to act, in anticipation of its being confirmed by the Commander-in-Chief, you have no one even doing the duty, I believe?"

"No, the Interpreter of the other regiment does

our work, and grumbles about it finely. I tell you though, I do not think he will put you in, as he has found out that you are going to live with Waller, and that gives him two enemies in one house," said Morris.

"We will see," I said, "and so now let us on with the uniform, order our buggy, and try our luck."

Left a moment to myself, how different all appeared to what but two months before it had been. Then I was in London asking Jones for his daughter, and bidding good bye to dear loving Amy, and the people at St. Helens. Now all around was disorder, and intense heat. Once again I was in military life, and already opposed to my commanding officer. I knew that there was nothing against my character, and that as a passed man, with no other passed officer present, the commanding officer would hardly dare to refuse to give me the acting appointment; still, knowing his dislike to Morris, I thought it not unlikely that he would do so, and was prepared to commence my career in again doing duty, by insisting upon my right to the vacancy. I had but one plan left for me in the event of the Colonel refusing to put me in orders, which was to apply direct to head-quarters, and remain satisfied with their decision.

CHAPTER XIV.

"COME along," said Waller, looking very red and hot in his uniform, hooked up to the chin, "the mare has a bad habit of kicking if you keep her standing; and old Dunderhead insists on my being there to a minute."

"I am ready," I said, getting into the vehicle, and feeling uncertain whether I should be allowed to remain in it, with the wicked-looking, cross-grained mare switching her hairless tail.

"Chor do, (let her go)," said Waller to the groom; and with a squeak and a bound, the brute sprang out of his hands, and putting her ears back, set to trotting vigorously.

Colonel Dunderhead was not a pleasant man to look at. His low forehead was made to appear still lower, by the crop of grizzled hair that he kept hanging down too near his eyebrows. He was a small man, with a sharp, thin voice, and a manner suspicious and irritable.

"Captain Villars—Colonel Dunderhead," said Waller, introducing me.

"Humph," responded the Colonel, "found it hot coming up, I should think, Captain Villars."

"Yes, Sir," I said, "it was hot. I have come, Colonel Dunderhead, to report my arrival, and to ask you to kindly put me in orders for the Interpretership, which I applied to you officially for from Calcutta."

"Mr. Vesey of the 80th is doing the duty," replied the Colonel.

"Only, Sir," I said, "because there is no qualified officer present with the regiment; and now that I have arrived, may I ask you to put me in. I have acted before."

"It rests, Captain Villars, with the Commander-in-Chief."

"The confirmation of your orders, Sir," I said, "but you can put me in to-day's orders, and I shall draw the allowances from to-day."

"Damn it, Sir," answered the little fellow, "don't instruct me. I know what orders to give, and Mr. Vesey will continue to act as Interpreter."

"Then, Colonel Dunderhead," I said, "you will not put me in, though it is my right to the appointment, for I have passed, and there is nothing against me?"

"I don't know that," said the irate Colonel. "If His Excellency likes to put you in he may, but I won't. I suppose you think to defy my authority, but you shan't."

"I shall apply to His Excellency myself," I said,

"and if I send it to you, will you countersign my application?"

"No, His Excellency will know of your arrival; and if it suits him to put you in, he will, but I am not going to ask him to give it to you."

"I do not want you to. Your simple countersignature is sufficient," I replied.

"Damn it, Sir—again instructing me. No, I will not forward your application," said Dunderhead.

There was a pause, for I did not reply, having resolved to apply direct to the Commander-in-Chief. Then came a question from Stumps.

"Any orders to-day, Colonel Dunderhead."

"No, none."

"Good morning, Colonel," I said, beckoning to Waller to move.

"Good morning," replied Dunderhead; and immediately afterwards we were rattling over the uneven roads behind the vicious looking mare.

"Well, what luck?" asked Morris on our arrival.

"What I expected," I replied; "he will not put me in, and screens himself behind the Commander-in-Chief from doing his duty. The little wretch was awfully ireful, when I told him that all he had to do was to put me in orders, and leave confirmation to the chief; he swore like a Trojan."

"Why," said Waller joining the conversation, "he always does that, and always says 'd— it, Sir, do *you think I don't* know?' when I reply to one of his

beat-about-the-bush questions, as to what he is to do. I am so accustomed to it, that I now hardly notice it. But I advise you, Villars, to write to head-quarters a public letter, asking His Excellency to put you in, there being no qualifield subaltern present; and enclose a private note, saying that you have asked Dunderhead to give you the acting appointment, but that he has refused to do so, giving no reason for it."

"Suppose there is a row about it?" I asked.

"No fear," said Morris; "they would write to Dunderhead for his reasons, and seeing by his reply that he was wrong, you would hear no more about it—be put in by the Chief, and old Dunderhead get a thundering wigging, which he would take very good care that neither you nor any body else should hear of."

"All right then," I replied, "I shall go to your office, Stumps, write the two letters, and then let us go over to mess for tiffin."

This being agreed to, I went away and wrote the necessary letters. Then putting on something cooler than red cloth, we walked across the road to the mess-house, meeting much the same men as in the morning. After a game of billiards, we returned home, a gallop at sunset, listened to the band, then a hot steamy dinner, ending with a hot steamy night; and thus concluded my first day at Hassanpore.

CHAPTER XV.

A FEW days after my arrival, came overland letters. How anxious I was to know their contents I need not tell the reader. It was with a view to a quiet undisturbed reading of them, that I retreated into the only private part of the Adjutant's house, namely, my bathing room; and there, in frightful heat, and among myriads of mosquitoes, I devoured their contents.

Jane wrote a long letter, saying that Amy had written constantly, was well, and that Jones was as obdurate as ever, and that they had heard of my arrival as far as Aden in safety. Henry had gone up to Hudson's Bay, and written to Davis acknowledging some money; and to all appearances seemed very well pleased with the new life he had selected. It appeared that he did not enter into particulars, but from his abuse of the slowness of England, and the praise of the sport and scenery around him, all concluded that he was tolerably happy.

The rest of the letter was full of descriptions of the beautiful weather they were enjoying, and how exquisite the rocks and banks about St. Helens appeared.

"Very different to this," thought I. "I wonder what Amy and the sisters would say if they saw me here, ever so hot, and eaten up by mosquitoes; even old Jones would say that I was earning my bread by the sweat of my brow." Reading more letters from others, all more or less descriptive of the delightful spring, made me dislike the hateful heat more than ever. "There they were," I thought, "able at all hours to go out, enjoy God's fresh air, and be surrounded by his beauties and handiwork; whereas, here was I, trying to get cool, punkahs and tatties going, shut up in darkness, and yet the thermometer marked on the table 91°. To go out was not only madness, but, from the heat, glare, and flies, not a thing to give pleasure. All round me the country was hideous, one great Sahara of sand, and none beyond two or three persons in my own regiment, who would care twopence if I died to-morrow."

The thought was not jovial, and as there was no use in making myself more miserable than Fate had determined I should be, I deprived the mosquitoes of further food, and joined Waller in his office.

Poor Waller, looking awfully hot, dressed in a shirt and loose drawers, had just returned from the Colonel's, where, by his excited manner and flushed

face, I saw he had had a row. As I entered, he said:

"I am going to resign the Adjutancy."

"Why?" I said.

"Dunderhead has behaved so badly to me, bullies me so, and is always asking me to resign."

"The very reason why I wouldn't," I replied. "If he has anything to say against you let him report you, but don't you give way to please him."

"It is ruin to me to do so," he said, "for I have not yet paid for the money I had to borrow for this house; I mean, I owe three thousand rupees yet to the bank on account of the building of this house. But I told him I would resign."

"You have not sent in your resignation?" I asked.

"No; I was just going to do so," he said, "when you came in. He told me to-day that the Havildar Major knew much more of the Adjutant's work than I did, so I told him he didn't; this led to a row, and I told him I would not hold the Adjutancy under him any longer."

"Excuse me, Stumps, for saying so, but more fool you! Colonel Dunderhead is hardly the judge of the fitness of an Adjutant. And so you would ruin yourself, just to let him put in that parasite, White?" I replied.

"What am I to do?" asked Stumps.

"Why, to-morrow, go there as usual, and if he

asks you where is the resignation you were kind enough to offer to send in, say you have changed your mind, and don't answer if he abuses you ever so much," I replied.

"All right," said Waller, his eyes brightening with the idea, "won't it make him savage! He'll swear like a trooper, and be—"

"Sold," I concluded.

In the evening we did not go to mess, but getting Morris to join us over some beer and grilled fowls, we concluded that the non-resignation was the best sell old Dunderhead had had for many a day, and all looked forward to the next day to see how the ill-tempered old man would take it.

At the mess early coffee, next morning, among the letters brought by the postman was one for myself from head-quarters, and enclosing an extract from General Orders, by which I was appointed to officiate as interpreter and quarter-master to the regiment; and so, shewing it to Waller, we determined that I should accompany him after breakfast to the Colonel's, and, with the extract in my hand, request once again to be put in Orders.

As soon as we entered, the Colonel set upon Waller, and after abusing about some Sepoy's petition having been returned, a thing for which by the bye he was in no way responsible, he demanded, "Why he had not, according to promise, sent in his resignation?"

"I have changed my mind, Colonel Dunderhead," said Stumps, looking towards me with something like a smile on his lips.

"Damn your changing of mind, Sir," said little Dunderhead, red with rage. "I don't allow my officers to change their minds. You shall send it in, Sir."

"No, Sir," said Stumps firmly, "I won't, I am too poor to be able to resign it. I shall continue to carry on the duties."

"No you shan't, I can tell you, Sir. I'll put you under arrest?"

"On what charges, Sir?" asked Stumps.

"Insubordination, Sir, neglect of duty, Sir. Ignorance, incapacity, and contempt of my authority," said Dunderhead, livid with rage and disappointment.

"I am ready to be tried for my conduct; and deny all these charges," said the quiet Stumps.

"What do you want, Captain Villars?" said Dunderhead, turning towards me, and apparently for the first time noticing that I was present.

"I have an extract from General Orders here, Sir," I said, "and may I request you will put me in Orders to officiate as Interpreter?"

"You will put him in to-day's Orders, Lieutenant Waller," said Dunderhead glaring at me.

"Then I continue the Adjutancy, Colonel Dunder-

head, being neither under arrest, nor superseded?" asked Waller.

"You will do as you're bid, Sir, and wait until I have reported your insubordinate conduct to the Commander-in-Chief," said the Colonel, at the same time rising, and thus hinting that we might go.

"What fun," said Waller, on arrival at Morris's quarters, "old Dunderhead nearly brought on an apoplectic fit in his rage. He insisted on my resigning, then on my refusal, swore he would put me under arrest; and quietly tamed down, into directing me to put Villars in Orders as Interpreter."

"Then you got the appointment," said Morris to me, "I'll bet that he has had a jolly rowing from head-quarters for not putting you in before; and this, added to Waller refusing to resign, has made him so angry. What a pity it is, that they do not take the command away from one so incapable."

"And give it to Major Morris," said Waller.

"With all my heart," said Morris. "For, really, the state of the regiment is disgraceful. Never a parade, and duty shuffled through any way."

As Waller had to return home to office, he and I waited no longer, and soon in the loosest possible costume were busy in writing overland letters.

In my long one to Jane, written chiefly for Amy's benefit, as also with the intention that through her it should all come to Mr. Jones' ears, I detailed the hardships I had endured in coming up at such a

period of the year, and how I had obtained the Interpretership. Then telling them to write to Mrs. Morris, and say how well her son the Major was, I concluded with the usual abuse of the intense heat of the climate.

As the season advanced, and the rains fell, came cooler weather, and we were not sorry when the relief of regiments was published in September, to find the 75th down for Malown, to march at an early date.

This Malown we knew to be but a dull, stupid little station on the Ganges; but as it was not far from Cawnpore, and as there was much talk of the annexation of Oudh, we came to the conclusion that if there was to be any fighting, we should be on the spot, and not improbably form part of the column invading Oudh.

CHAPTER XVI.

THIS annexation of Oudh had been so often talked of, and never put into execution, that we feared it would never occur; and with the departure of Lord Dalhousie, all hopes of that country being settled would vanish. From my first days in India, I had heard of nothing but anarchy and violence going on in Oudh; and now with all, having the true interests of the people at heart, desired that some means might be adopted, by which life would be more secure, and our territories across the river saved from an inundation of villains. At Cawnpore I had been robbed, as indeed had been almost every-one I ever met, and yet no trace remained of the thieves; because if the civil power exert themselves, and there be a chance of conviction, away would run all parties engaged in it across the bridge of boats, and in Oudh laugh at our authority. As Interpreter of my regiment, would come daily, petition after petition from Sepoys, for my perusal, detailing acts of violence by powerful and lawless zemeendars.

Often have the men when making their statement, shewing how their families have been dispossessed of their lands, and many of them barbarously murdered, added, "Aye, Sahib, how I wish the Sirkar would take the country." Petition after petition have I sent, and seldom did an answer come, not but what it was received and attended to by the President, but beyond that court it was not likely to be received with favour. The courtier or eunuch that had seized the land, was not likely to tell his own tale badly, and as might made right, people or officials (natives) were not the ones to give the poorest justice. Even Mahomedans have complained. Such Oudhan Mussulmen as enlisted, not for the pride of wearing a brick red coat, but as Sepoys their petitions would receive some attention. These have found that even the bond of religion was not sufficient always to save them from wrong and murder.

One day after I had been very busy in writing overland letters, trying to assure Amy, through Ella, that there was no chance of fighting, that the Sepoys and all the country were on our side—I was surprised by a Sepoy rushing in a very excited manner into Waller's office, in which I was writing.

"Sir, Sir," said the man, holding a Hindostani letter in his hand. "I want justice; see here at Fyzabad they have killed my father."

The man had no business to come unaccompanied by a non-commissioned officer; but this I did not

notice, owing to the circumstances. "Now quietly," was my reply, "how did it occur?"

"Occur," said the man. "How, Sahib? Why, through his being murdered by the Collector. In Oudh all my family are murdered."

It was now my turn to ask "how?" as thinking a collector and magistrate might be perhaps a bad imitation of ours, I was somewhat surprised to hear of his murdering a Sepoy's father.

In a very excited state, though somewhat calmer than at first, being evidently pleased at the interest I was taking, the tall grenadier Sepoy told me as follows:

"I am a Mussulman from Fyzabad, and had several brothers. Some of them remained cultivating our land, which we have had in the family many, many years, and one went with myself into this regiment. He was killed at the Hurree Puttun battle. When I went last on furlough, I found some eunuch from the court had taken our property, and that in its defence two of my brothers were killed, and the others ran away, leaving my father to be protected by other Mussulmen. I have sent through you and the Colonel Sahib, a very great number of petitions; but suppose they have never been received, as I never get an answer, and so I have wasted much money in buying postage stamps, as now the Sirkar makes us prepay these petitions. But, Sir, I have just received this letter, and they tell me that the Collec-

tor and Judge has killed my father, and if I can, I will have the fellow's life for it."

"Gently, Mahomed Bux," I said, "tell me how it occurred, and I will see what the Colonel can do. We will soon annex Oudh, and then there will be no more cruelty."

"That will be a great day," said the man again calmer. "It seems that there was a trial going on at Fyzabad before the man they call the Cazee, and my father was summoned as a witness. As soon as the judge saw my father, he abused him very much, and asked him to tell what he knew about the matter, but as my father knew nothing at all, he replied that he could not. 'I'll make you then,' said the judge, and ordering a carpenter, who was busy mending the door way with a hatchet, to advance, directed him to chop off my father's right hand. It was done; and then raising his other arm high in the air, my father said, 'I declare before God and man that I know nothing; and you may cut off this hand, but I am no liar.' 'It shall be done,' replied the judge; and again was the carpenter made to use his hatchet. Now bleeding and faint did my father stagger through the shavings at the door, and soon fell dead on the plain. For this am I not to be revenged?" said the man, his eyes rolling like an angry tiger's.

"I will go over to the Colonel's about it now," I said, "so tell the servant to order my horse; but I can see no help for you."

"If the Colonel will write to the Resident, then the Cazee will be punished," said the Sepoy, going back to his lines.

"Where are you going to?" said Morris, riding up and praising the beautiful coolness of the October afternoon.

"Off to the Colonel's," I replied, "about a Sepoy's petition. A man has just come here giving me a horrible account of cruelty, and I want to get Dunderhead to write to the Resident on the subject."

"Catch him. Moreover, it is no use your going. He never sees any one after two," said Morris.

"I'll see," I said, galloping off.

I knew the Colonel's official hours were from twelve until two; but as I had promised this soldier, and was anxious not to lose a day, as I should have done by deferring the matter until next day, I went over at once.

"Is the Colonel at home?" said I to one of his pet Sepoys that always haunted the house.

"Yes, Sir," answered the man, opening the drawing-room door, and I walked nearly over the little man, who was mending a pen in the doorway.

Plunging at once 'in medias res,' I awaited the result, and was not surprised to hear him say, "The Sepoy is a Mussulman, eh! then let him write a petition for my counter-signature."

"But the man has asked me to get an English letter written to the Resident detailing facts," I replied.

"Who the devil is going to bother the Resident with their petitions written out in English? It is against orders. It must be in Hindostani."

"I will write the letter willingly, Colonel," I said, "if it is sent in the usual manner as a petition, it will be handed over to the Native Agency, and the man never get justice."

"You will do no such thing. There is a rule for these things, and that must be followed. These are not my office hours, Captain Villars."

"I am aware of that, Colonel; but the emergency of the case is my excuse for coming. I wished to tell the poor man that you would consent to let me write."

"If you choose to come at the proper time, and bring the man with you, then I will see. I am now going out."

Taking the very uncivil hint to be off, I wished "good evening," and joined Morris, Waller and others at the mess table.

"I wonder," said Morris, "his being so civil as to listen at all, but it is that old system of rule and regulation. You see, Dunderhead will not write to the Resident, because Sepoys are to send Hindostani petitions; and through fellows of this sort the Government is injured."

"The fool cannot discriminate between a common, simple petition, and a case of murder and robbery!"

"Pshaw!" said Stumps. "Dunderhead would *write quick enough* if it had been about that Havil-

dar Major, or any high caste Brahmin, but as it is for a Mussulman, he does not care twopence. I wish to goodness he was more fair towards the men, or, at any rate, would stick to one rule; for now that we are to remain here but a few day's longer, it gives me no end of bother, his altering his mind every day."

"We are not going to have any regiment in our place," said the Doctor, "are we?"

"Miserecordia mea," said Stumps. "I fear not, for we march in a week, and none are mentioned as coming; and so we are all done in the house way, for there will be nobody to buy them. It is too bad! I have built twice, and am ruined."

"As to that," said Morris, "I expect you are not half so badly off as some of the fellows without an appointment. This building continually is destruction to our service, and fetters a man for life."

"Pshaw!" said the Doctor, "it is not in building that the rupees are sank; our commanders-in-chief would not dare tell that to the people at home, it might appear too probable. 'Champagne tiffins,' that is the correct version. An indebted, indolent, useless army of ignorant field officers, and champagne-swilling juniors."

"I wish," said Morris, "most of us could even afford beer, much more champagne. This beer is a rupee a bottle, and precious small bottles they are, too!" and he held up a small quart to show.

"Well, it is no use grumbling," I said. "Some day, perhaps, the people at home will judge us less harshly, and not believe all the ravings of a heated brain. It is a shame to villify a whole army, because some extravagant, reckless men gamble and drink champagne! I know that at this table, I have known men drinking light-coloured toast and water, put into a wine bottle, and sipped as wine."

"Who used to do it?" asked Morris.

"Poor little Douglas that was killed at Sobraon," I said. "He was very poor, and had so much to pay for, that there was hardly enough left for him to live on. He used to take wine with you, and no one was any the wiser."

"How did you know of it then?" asked Stumps.

"Why, I was sitting near him one day and somebody asked me to take wine; I happened to have just sent for a bottle, and turning to Douglas, said, 'give me some of yours, my own has not come,' and helping myself before he had time to stop me, became aware of the imposition."

"What did he say?"

"Only laughed at the faces I made, and quietly said, 'Queer, but very wholesome wine that, isn't it?'"

"Poor boy!" said Morris. "How nice he was!" And for an hour did we talk of my lost friend.

Next day, I went over to the Colonel's, taking with me not only the Sepoy, but a letter addressed to

the Resident, detailing all the miseries the man's family had suffered. At first, there was much talk about the route to Malown, the supplies, tents, &c., &c., all of which were in my department. These having been settled, and the Adjutant's usual questions answered in the negative, I introduced my Sepoy and subject of the previous evening.

"Hang the fellow!" began Dunderhead, "I dare say it is all a lie. These Mussulmen always give trouble; they are as bad as Sikhs, and impose on you and the Adjutant."

"If it is a lie, Colonel," I said, "the Resident could find it out, and then the man would be punished; but the excitement of the man when he told the tale, makes me believe. Moreover, I know the man. He was formerly in my own company, and I ever found him steady."

"Nonsense! let him petition in the regular way."

"But please, Colonel, allow me to ask you to help him. It shall entail no trouble upon you. I promised the man that I would try and get you to write. When he hears you refuse, he may think you do for one man more than for another."

"Let him think, discipline must be preserved," said this splendid specimen of Commandant; then adding, "send me a letter, and I will see about signing it." I put on my forage cap and returned to my quarters.

CHAPTER XVII.

Dismissing the Sepoy, I took the letter I had previously written from my pocket, and looking it carefully over, came to the conclusion that it would answer the purpose; and sent it over for signature by my orderly. After some time I was gratified to see the signature affixed, and giving the Sepoy the official letter to post, received in return from him, first a salute, and then thanks by the dozen. After this, I found that I got on better with Dunderhead. I never actually opposed him, but quietly let him have his own way, still having my own also. One thing I was a Captain, and only officiating as regimental staff, which Waller was not; but what gave me an advantage, was the impossibility of his interfering with my duties; for as quarter-master, the regimental stores were under me, and as interpreter, none could dispute my translations, or usurp my particular services.

Just as the mornings became chilly, the 75th Regiment Native Infantry quitted the cantonments of Hassanpore. The band frightening away the owls

from the little trees about, by playing "The girls we left behind us." Of these we left very few; the married ladies of the 80th could not be considered as such, and the snub-nosed commissioner's daughter was too old and ugly, to cause regret at quitting. The tune was inappropriate, too, if applied to the drummers or men, as their girls, a quantity of black things, followed the regiment; some on half-starved, weak-hocked ponies, and others in bylees, or a native conveyance on two wheels, covered with red coloured curtains, and dragged through the dust by a couple of bullocks.

Day after day was the same old thing. Twelve to fourteen miles march over sandy roads; carts breaking down; carriage wanting to be replaced; supplies bad or dear; and camp followers plundering villages. No order appeared to be kept. Notwithstanding the now bitterly cold weather as Christmas came on, the old Colonel dragged the regiment out at 3 A.M. and stumbling, stiff and frozen, we toiled on, often to arrive at the halting place at sunrise, and to wait there for three or four hours until some breakfast could be got ready, as the things sent on over night had sometimes not arrived. The men straggled all over the road and obeyed nobody, knowing that the Colonel would not support the Adjutant or any officer giving orders for their better behaviour.

On arrival at stations, I felt ashamed of my old

corps, and sometimes regretted not taking an appointment that had been offered me in the Punjaub. Poor Stumps became quite melancholy over the state of affairs, and declared that the men cared for nobody.

I found the men much as ever, some were impertinent, and tried to defy my authority; but two of them that were exceedingly impertinent, I had tried by a court-martial and dismissed the service. This was a lesson to the others, and as they knew me, and my ideas regarding discipline, they took very good care to steer clear of offending me.

I believe I was always just, always accessible, and ever willing to listen to their complaints; but I never remitted punishment, and never punished lightly. I was not always for drill and dress; but insisted on all under me, whether officer or man, doing their duties, endeavouring to do my own. I never allowed an answer, but after the parade was dismissed, or at any time in my office, was willing to hear what the men had to say. I believe I was a favourite in the regiment, both among officers and men; and having the interests of my regiment at heart, the present lax state of discipline vexed me sadly.

As we neared Malown, the richness of the country struck us much after the bare, sandy plains of the Punjaub. Day after day did we pass magnificent topes of mango trees, their branches being the

roosting places of numberless peacocks, whilst round their rugged trunks played myriads of grey striped squirrels. Once more was game abundant, and the mess-breakfast and dinner improved by partridge, snipe and wild duck. Now came the Trunk Road, and soon after we arrived at the little station of Malown, our band heralding the arrival of the regiment with "See the conquering hero comes."

We did not much look like heroes, for, notwithstanding every effort made by us all, the regiment straggled dreadfully; and formed line on the leading section, in a manner worthy of gaol policemen; and as there were several residents of the station looking on, we felt very unheroic, and glad to retire to the mess-tent, as soon as dismissed from parade.

A few days after this, the 84th Native Infantry marched towards Cawnpore, and we being brought on the strength of the station, relieved them of their duties. After calling on the people, selecting a mess-house, and arranging for ourselves, we settled down, and before a fortnight expired, had entertained all the station at dinner.

There was still the old talk of invasion of Oudh, but as the force was assembling at Cawnpore, and we were left here, there appeared no hopes of our forming part. To some of the young hands who had never been in action, and longed for a chance of distinguishing themselves, this inaction was a sore thing; and evening after evening would the mess-

room echo with grumblings at their luck. To myself and others who had seen some fighting, we had discovered that by it comes often no good to any one; but as we were certain, from conversations with the men, and the want of preparation displayed by the Oudhans, there would be no fighting, and only expense, we cared not to leave Malown.

When going over the men's lines, I often asked them questions regarding the occupation; and never once did I find one man appear to think our doing so, as unjust or otherwise than beneficial to all, except to the emasculated Court at Lucknow. All were loud in crying out for justice; and individual cases of violence and oppression were quoted by hundreds. Sometimes a little group of non-commissioned officers and men would gather round, and ask me questions regarding Russia, as in their opinion, that country next to "Walayut" or the English country, was the most powerful in the world. They knew that she had opposed Turkey and been beaten in some great fort on the sea; "but had she not taken a lot of Sahibs prisoners, and shewed them off to the Mussulmen? There was a very strong fort," they said, "in the country of Room or Turkey, which we had defended and lost; and now that Room wanted to have peace, the people of 'Walayut' and France agreed also."

As natives are always gentlemen, none of them openly shewed that they disbelieved my statements, "that the peace was sued for by Russia, and that

Turkey and France had had enough." They would, as the first bugle rang out for mess, retire to their evening duties, respectfully saluting me; but still confident in their own minds that the traditional story of Room was the true one—which is, that Room is the mistress of the world, all other countries being more or less subject to her, and are forced in being required to lend their armies and navies for Turkey's use. Russia has broken away from this miraldom, and at times makes inroads upon Turkey. This Russian war was caused by one of these, and England and France, as in duty bound, helped the true believers in ejecting the new comers. Of course, as soon as this was done, the war was at an end, and we, small fry, were dismissed by Turkey.

The government issued a proclamation on the subject, and this I duly read to the men, who appeared to pay very little attention to it.

"What do the men care for all that about Sebastapol?" said Stumps; "they don't understand one half of it."

"No, that they don't," I replied, "I spoke to some of the men about it as I came home, and all they said was 'bheaut tope,' lots of guns. I don't think they quite believe it, and the language it is written in is so fine that they cannot understand it."

"I saw yesterday," said Waller, "this proclamation stuck up in our quarter-guard, all over the bazaar, and in the native city; and every bit of it was printed in the Persian character, and cram full

of hard Arabic words. Why do not the Government issue a thing that the poorest and most ignorant can read, and understand. Here in India, there are one hundred and fifty million Hindoos, all, more or less, understanding the Nagari character, and plain Hindostani; and yet they print off thousands of these proclamations in Persian character, using Arabic nouns and numerals; whereas there are not ten million Mussulmen in India, and they only use these letters?"

"I do not know," I replied, "about the proportion of Hindoos to Mussulmen; but believe it is at least fifteen to one. But don't you see how everything, even the answers to Sepoys' petitions, is wrapped up in this so-called court language. Why they emanate from the civil authorities, who are surrounded by cringing Mussulmen, and in those courts nothing else but this gibberish is talked. It used to be the court language; and all the rulers being proud of their descent, endeavoured to prove it by the large admission of Persian and Arabic words. We adopted the system, and as a civilian likes to talk fine, and to show off his acquaintance with Hafiz, he permits Persian to be almost entirely used in his court; and Government, which is after all, all civilians, believe it is the language of the country."

"I have often thought of this," said Stumps, "and consider it very unfair to the poor man, who *probably* does not understand one word that is said

to him, besides being bullied by every blackguard Mahomedan in the court. If he is a Hindoo, he is not likely to have anything explained to him, and the Huzoor is far too great a chief to let the half naked man before him know that the gabbled Persian he has been listening to, is evidence for or against him, and that *zeada hurdee adab*, 'more is disrespectful,' means the little word *bus*, or 'enough,' in his own tongue."

"Our courts are iniquitous I think," I said, "I have been down day after day to the collector or deputy, or whatever the man calls himself, about the robbery of brass pots that took place in our bazaar, and never saw such a prostitution of justice. Prisoners and witnesses jumbled up any how; every blackguard from the head nigger down to the chuprassie, can ask what questions they like, either to witnesses or prisoners; and actually the evidence of witnesses is taken down in writing, not in the presence of the judge. Yesterday, the two fellows that were caught were brought up, and the chief witness against them, was Seu Nerain, Sepoy. To my surprise Seu Nerain's evidence was read out to the deputy in language, that neither the Sepoy nor his father before him ever used or understood. He was then asked if this was what he said. '*Han*, yes,' replied Seu Nerain. 'Then, said the deputy turning to the prisoner, '*bolo*, speak,' and after the poor wretch—first looking at one hairy turbaned Mahomedan near him, who had

probably threatened him with torture by the chilly, then to another who had perhaps tried what effect stones and mud on his stomach had had—replied, '*Ap muaf kejie*, please excuse me, Sir;' and was then sentenced to two years' hard labour."

"Neat state of things," said Stumps, putting on his uniform, and going over to ask the usual question regarding orders from the Colonel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

To my surprise, Waller did not return until somewhat late in the afternoon; and then he told me that orders had been received for this regiment to quit cantonments, and join the force destined for Lucknow. No particular orders were given; they were to march as soon as possible, and at Cawnpore join the Lucknow force; for by that name, was called the large amount of Sepoys collected at and about Cawnpore.

At mess, of course, the subject was much discussed; but as each person had a theory of his own concerning the government of natives—the proper way to act in the annexation, invasion, or whatever it might be called of Oudh, was left undecided, and the boys went home happy in the thought that yet they might see service.

Observing Morris had said but little all night, and that what he had said was rather opposed to this invasion, I, with Waller, remained until all had gone; and then throwing logs on the fire, and lighting more cheroots, lay by for what, in slang terms, was called "a jaw."

"Why, Major," said Waller, putting his short legs comfortably on the brick work, intended to represent an English grate. "Do you think that we shall not have a most hearty welcome from all the poorer people of Oudh?"

"I do not know," he answered. "Remember Sleeman objects to this, and he knows these fellows well. I do not pretend to know, and don't care; but it strikes me that if there was a necessity for this now, there was just as great years ago—only at that time we had an Afghan, then a Punjaub, afterwards a Burmah war on our hands, and we could not then afford to listen to the cry of suffering millions"

"But, Major," said I, "I consider it our duty not only to do justice in our own states, but to make dependant princes do their duty towards their subjects. Here in Oudh, everything is sacrificed to the villainous court, and so long as they have their pleasures, they care not how they are wrung from the poorer man."

"Fair enough," said Morris. "But I cannot think either princes or people take the same views as we do of our justice. I often think their haphazard justice is better than that doled out through our cumbrous civil courts. No, I do not like this; and by the want of enthusiasm in every native, am convinced that they look on our taking Oudh as a theft. If it were in war time they could understand

it, as all Asiatics understand the weakest going to the wall, and either territory or land being given to the stronger. But here there is no war, and I very much doubt if anyone cares whether we take the country or not."

"I cannot think," said I, "but that it is our duty to annex every state in which there is not proper government. In the first place, our rule being established there, allows every man to think and act as he likes on religious matters; and thus by the action of our missionaries and the example set by some, we may hope to establish Christianity. Another thing. If the Government of an adjacent state is so bad that ours is inundated with scamps, and our subjects liable to constant alarm and violence from their lawlessness, surely we should not be doing right in increasing our police, and taxing our peaceable subjects to pay for them."

"There is much to be said on both sides," said Morris. "As to our mission, it is of course to spread Christianity, though that can be done by other means than annexation, or even the wonderful example set by us all. I can't see much self-denial in missionaries in this country, they being far too well paid and cared for, to reach my idea of the man sacrificing everything for the love of our Lord; and as for the example, as a general rule, the less said about it the better. If the Government avoided petty wars, and were larger minded, I think the old

'I am a Roman,' would be sufficient safe guard for those preaching the Gospel. It is hard, perhaps, that our people should suffer, because we have a lawless neighbour; but when we took that country, we knew this, and ought to have calculated the cost."

"But," said Waller, "is the voice of the multitude crying out against the tyranny of their rulers, never to be heard? Are we, the one's appealed to, indeed, the only strong power near, and from whom any hope of deliverance can come; are we, I say, to look coldly on, and perhaps foster revolution?"

"Well done, Stumps!" said Morris. "I cannot think our mission to India is purely philanthropical, and all we are to do is to act Don Quixote on a large scale. Had we always done so, then I should not object to our doing so in this instance; but we have been rapacious, and now we will annex Oudh, not on account of your suffering millions, but because after paying its expenses, there will be at least a surplus of a million. Look at our policy from Hastings downwards—Hastings coolly picked quarrels with native princes, because their territories would not only pay the expenses of the war, but help to replenish the Company's exhausted treasury. He used to be glad enough to borrow millions from the Vizier that had usurped the throne of Oudh, and did not, I presume, ask how he raised it. Now I suppose that he is pumped dry, we turn him out. Moreover,

if the cry of the millions is our cry, why did we not listen to the groan from Cashmere, when we sold it to Goolab Sing? Why, because we were paid for it; and the country was too far away from our territories, such as Kangra and Jullundur, to allow of its paying."

"Pretty strong against us, I allow," said Stumps; "but as we cannot always be doing good, let us do so sometimes."

"Easy morality," replied the Major. "Do good when the doing so does not injure yourself. Do you think the natives are so blind, that they cannot see through our motives. They are sharp enough; and even if they were not, we have enemies in this country from Russia, Persia, aye! and France, who would willingly brighten their intellects. I, of course, have no objection to this annexation of Oudh. I only wish the whole of India was annexed; but hate the cant of saying we do it for the sake of philanthropy. I suppose that about the time when we were fighting Hastings, Mahmoud of Ghazni turned philanthropist and invaded India; as also did the Mogul Tartars. No; they were, I expect, actuated by the same motives as ourselves, viz., the love of gold."

"Come along home," said I, cutting short the harangue. "We are off in two days for the invasion, or whatever you like to call it, and I don't care twopence whether we go as philanthropists or not."

Next day was Sunday, and after attending morning service, my time was given up to making preparations for the morrow's march. All day long came little notes, called "chits," from various officers, complaining of the bad quality of the carriage obtained either for themselves or companies. My compound, or the small enclosed space about my bungalow was filled with bellowing camels, butting bullocks, and unwilling hackery drivers. Many of these with their carts had been seized in the district miles away, and were unwilling to lend their carts, even though the rate of hire was fixed very highly. Probably, in the seizure of some of these carts, great injustice was done to the owners, and at certain seasons of the year, the cultivator must suffer pecuniary loss; but the hire is always regularly paid, and the cart exempted from re-seizure.

It would be better had each regiment attached to it a baggage train, carts large and strong, placed under care of the quarter-master, and the bullocks arranged for by contract. The system of seizing through the civil authorities is liable to misuse, more particularly with native agency. Native tusseeldars and kotwals are not likely to study the justice of the thing, and consider whether the cart going through their districts is returning from a long march, or prepared to commence one; and, probably, the capability of its again being seized, rests with the amount of bribe given.

There were many complaints made to me by these drivers, but I had no power to listen. I was instructed to rely on the civil authorities for so much carriage, either camels or carts, and it was their duty to carry out the orders of Government regarding the treatment of carriage proprietors. I could not but know that much was true, and much false, that these hackery and camel men stated; but saw how impossible it would be for any one man, be he collector, judge, or mere deputy-joint, or even all three rolled into one, to investigate the case of every complaining carter.

Next day, very early in the morning, the 75th once more treated the owls to "The girls we left behind us," and a few days more saw them mixed up with masses of infantry, chiefly native, bound for Lucknow.

CHAPTER XIX.

THERE was nothing extraordinary in the march into Oudh; the villagers gave supplies willingly enough, and generally speaking, hailed our advent. At Lucknow there was no resistance, and no joy shewn. The inhabitants had too long been accustomed to the sight of British troops to care for the number being augmented; and when, after this, the order for the annexation of the kingdom was read to the troops, and explained to the people—none, to me, appeared to consider it otherwise than a matter of course, and as such, not worth noticing. The king was dethroned, the wild beasts sold, and all of us white men traversed the city as before. Sometimes one would be passed and scowled upon by an eunuch or ex-minister; but this was natural, our coming had destroyed their profits, and would be ruin to them. Once came murmurings of discontent having shewn itself in a distant part; but it was in one of the king's old regiments, and the native officers attached to it, seeing an end to their power, had instigated the men to acts of insubordination.

Now came the dividing of the country into certain districts, and the appointment of officers, as, *magistrates,* collectors of revenue, road surveyors,

&c., &c. Then, as the king left Lucknow under the wing of the Italian warehouseman, dubbed Captain for the trip; and whilst the gallant officer in England predicted our downfall, did the Sepoy army and the Oudh contingents march from the capital, to support the new rulers in the more remote provinces of the kingdom.

Whilst at Lucknow, I was offered an appointment; but as it entailed my doing civil duties, and building a house some miles away from any civilized being; and being quite alone, with but a very slight improvement on my regimental pay, I refused to leave the old corps; and so started with them for the back woods, as we called Alumpoor, rather a large town not very far from the Teraie or dense jungle by which the lower range of hills is surrounded, and near which we were to be cantoned.

I was not sorry to leave Lucknow, squalour and magnificence were so blended, that there was nothing to admire. The flies were more than a pest, and the smell from bad drainage, and the congregation of masses of human beings, something awful.

Our Sepoys were delighted at the change to Alumpoor, and talked much of constant leave to their homes. The country round they declared as being beautiful, living very cheap, and sport abundant. Altogether we considered ourselves fortunate, and all, both officers and men, started in great spirits for our destination.

Our road lay over the usual sandy plains; but instead of being as in the Punjaub, bare and treeless, here it was a little undulating, well watered, and covered with mango topes. The country swarmed with game, and our march was delightful. Even Morris began to think that our coming did good, and that the pleasure shewn by the villagers as we passed, was genuine.

For my part, I considered our coming to be a blessing, and conversed freely with the men on the subject. They appeared to think so, too, and as when they told me these things, numbers of their village brethren were standing around, I had no reason to doubt. Often, when a party of us had been out shooting, would villagers offer us milk, and help to beat up game. The old men blessed us, and wished well to the government giving us employ. Three pleasant weeks passed thus, and on a bright hot morning in April did we pitch our tents in the mango trees, fronting the town of Alumpoor.

This Alumpoor was a town of no great importance. In the rear ran a nullah, dry in the cold weather, but deep and muddy in the rainy season. Around were numerous mango topes, and in front, a large open plain, on which, experience told us, our lines would be built and parades held. Far away—a thin waving line on the glaring horizon—rose the everlasting hills; but so distant, and the jungle at the foot of them so *impenetrable*, that to reach them seemed impossible.

The inhabitants of Alumpoor were chiefly Mahomedans, but were well disposed towards us; and so after breakfast, Morris, myself, and Waller, wandered towards the city. This we found, like all native cities, showy and dirty; but as there was plenty for both Interpreter and Adjutant to do, we were unable to give the inhabitants much of our society—so returned to discharge carriage, and settle accounts.

This was done, and in a day or two the Colonel and myself set out to look for a site for cantonments. There being no executive officer, we were fixed upon by the Government to act as such, and without much difficulty, I discovered a large flat space, naturally drained, and somewhat higher than the surrounding country. From my slight knowledge of surveying, I was able to take the levels, and mark out the various lines for both officers and men—a plan having been sent by the authorities, which fixed the size of each officer's compound. As old Dunderhead knew nothing, except that trees in the compound would be advisable, he did not interfere in my arrangments, but signed my plans and sent them off for approval.

Days and weeks elapsed before an answer came, and until it did so we were forced to live in tents, the heat of which had now become frightful. Had we attempted to build, and the site selected not have been approved of by the executive department, all our labour would have been lost, and the cost

thrown away. At last we were informed that a Lieutenant—who had somehow scraped through the surveying examination, would come to Alumpoor, and be President of a committee to select a site for cantonments. Just as the hot winds began to blow the Lieutenant arrived, and as he knew no more about surveying than I did, he was unable to offer any objection to the site chosen. Three days after this we were busy with mud bricks, grass, and sissoo wood.

At first we obtained labour and material pretty cheap; but as soon as Government began to build, we were obliged to increase the workman's pay. The Government gave the same daily wages here—where labour was to be had for almost nothing—as they did at Peshawur, where it was forty times more valuable. Now came the interference of the civil authorities, and daily did we have rows and difficulties. The labour that offered itself freely, and the workmen who were at first satisfied with the daily pay, now were hard to obtain, and had become discontented. Courts of justice, and jails must be built in the civil lines, and as it is hot for the Collector Sahib to do justice, even in a large tent, carried and cared for on his account by the Government, the kutcherry with two or three private rooms must be built, and all the labour of Alumpoor must be forced to do it. How can military men care for exposure, they are paid for it, and are not missed if *they die; whereas* even the native policeman is more

valuable, being part of the civil establishment, and so shall have his hut finished before any liver-stricken Captain shall get his bungalow made habitable. The hospital and Sepoy lines gradually crept above the ground, and before the rains commenced were completed, certainly in somewhat of a rough manner. Our poor little bungalows ran up at first very fast, but just as we hoped to be in them before the rains set in, the civil authorities arrived, and slow was the after progress. To us, building with sun burnt bricks, the advent of the rains was a dreadful calamity, and without some sort of roof was erected, little of the walls would be left standing, after the first downfall. Already had these little houses cost a large sum of money, and continuing to build was to many certain ruin, and to all looked very much like throwing good money after bad; but the frightful heat in tents, and the teeth beginning to chatter with fever, warned many of us that our present shelter was certain death.

I was far from well, having through exposure had something very like a slight stroke of the sun; so cost what it would, I was determined to expedite the covering of the little abode built between myself and Stumps. I took the greatest share of the expense, not only because I could best afford it, but also because I was the most anxious to avoid passing the rains in tents. However, I was unable to do this, for after two days rolling thunder and intense heat, down came the long lines of water, and greedily

did the thirsty earth suck up for four days this continued stream. Fortunately for Stumps and myself, our roof was on, and slightly thatched; not so many others, and now that the rain ceased, the full extent of damage became apparent. In many instances, nothing was left of the half built house but a heap of mud, from out of which protruded window frames, door frames, and beams. Weeping over his losses might be seen the ruined subaltern, dressed in little more than a shirt and loose drawers, and cursing the authorities that caused the misery.

Even my own loss, by the setting in of the rainy season was great, but having private means I could afford to lose. But this was far from being the case with most of the others, penniless and indebted subalterns. To them, shelter was as necessary as to the commissioner; and yet in building, he, the poor wretched sub on his 245 rupees a month, with deductions yet to be made for band, mess, and regimental institutions, was forced to go into the market against the Government, and build for himself, what the rich civilian had built for him. Loud were the cries of shame at mess that night, for all knew that had the civil authorities used their influence but properly, and let us but have had a fair chance in the labour market, much of this loss would have been spared.

On going to the civil lines, we found their kutcherry finished, two detached bungalows the same, and buildings of all sorts erected and made most

comfortable for the villainous fry of Mahomedans attached to the court. Surely, I thought, these men could better have waited in tents than us; and the labour used in building their thannahs, houses and roads, given over to us in cantonments.

However, there was no help for it, the damage was done; and almost every officer in the 75th Regiment Native Infantry plunged irretrievably into debt. Not by champagne tiffins, nor extravagance, although most probably their friends at home, on the authority of a Commander-in-Chief, or a Bombay officer furnishing hints, would think one, if not both, was the cause.

I had received numerous letters from St. Helens, giving me much the same account as formerly of Mr. Jones. He was not very well, and had been twice down to The Elms taking Amy with him. The families had visited, and now that I was absent, Mr. Jones appeared willing enough to allow of Amy and my sisters meeting as formerly. Long talks these kind-hearted girls had together about me; and many were the little plans concocted to get Jones to yield consent, but he seemed obdurate as ever, and would not hear a word on the subject. Amy's notes to Ella were full of hopes and prayers for my welfare, whilst she begged me, through Ella, to consider my health; and instead of risking exposure in tents, during the deadly months of August and September, to take two months leave of absence to the Hills.

Henry had written to his mother almost a kind letter; and was still satisfied with North America.

As I could not shake off my fever, and as the duties of my appointment, though properly only to be performed by an Interpreter, were not very difficult—I determined upon taking Amy's advice, and leave Alumpoor for August and September, or even longer, should I not get quite well in the Hills. Stumps was well enough, and could not only look after the Interpreter's office, but the house building; and Morris with myself could go and cool our livers at Mussouree.

There was some difficulty at first in getting Dunderhead to consent to both of us going; as he had an idea that being at Alumpoor was on service, and leave consequently only to be given in very urgent cases; but on being told that all the Sepoys and native officers had leave, he reconsidered his opinion, and after mess, one pouring, pitch dark night in August, we started in doolies for Lucknow and Ferruckabad.

To proceed at all across such a country as Oudh in the rainy season was no easy matter, and we were not sorry to find, after arrival at Lucknow, that the best way would be to change our doolies for the Trunk, and run along the Trunk Road from Cawnpore to Seharanpore. This we did, and after breakfast and bathing at beautiful, unhealthy Deyrah, cantered off up the hill, and two hours after were sitting over a fire in the club-room at Mussouree.

CHAPTER XX.

THE change from the dreadfully steamy heat of Seharanpore and Deyrah, to the cool breezes of Mussouree appeared almost magical. Here were we enjoying beer of almost an icy coldness over a fire in the club, whilst at our feet, seemingly but three miles away as the crow flies, lay the hot, white-looking houses of Rajpore and Deyrah, enveloped in misty heat. Beyond was the low tiger-haunted Sewalik range of hills, and then stretching out until land and sky met, were the hot sandy plains of India.

Perched up around, were houses and barracks. To my right the camel's back mountain, its bare precipitous side sprinkled with white-washed cottages. Behind, and through the odoriferous ghee and asafœtida smelling bazaar, was Landour, its hills covered with barracks and officers' quarters. How glorious was the view beyond, mountain piled on mountain, until the purple distance was closed with the peaks of everlasting snow.

How beautiful all this appeared to me; and how I

longed that she, for whose sake I had again returned to India, was with me to add her share of admiration for the wonderful scenes around.

I had seen finer snow, and more lofty mountains when years ago at Nainee Tal; but after the quiet humdrum life at Alumpoor and the everlasting flat country round, this change to the Hills appeared to have a double charm; and my two months leave had passed before I was either quite well, or had had half enough enjoyment.

The rainy season lasted but little longer than to the end of August; and as the weather became clear, were little picnic parties made, and short trips into the interior. Morris and myself entered into the full enjoyment of everything, and were only sorry when the time came for our once again returning to Alumpoor.

Stumps, the Adjutant, had been a good correspondent, and kept us aware of all that was going on; which in truth was very little. Our house being finished, he had entered it on the last day of August, and as it, and the mess-house, were the only two completed, they were both filled with officers; most of whom had been driven out of their tents by continued rain, and frequent attacks of fever. The Colonel had been nearly killed by his only habitable room coming down with a run, and was now, to the disgust of the younger fellows, a resident in a small room in the mess. The men coming

back from temporary leave, he said, did not seem contented, and declared that our rule was not so great a blessing as expected, and that Dunderhead actually talked of having parades in the coming cold weather.

One bright day in October, clear and almost cold, Morris and myself left Mussouree for Deyrah, to start that evening for the detestable Alumpoor, there once again to dabble in bricks and mortar, and dance attendance on Dunderhead.

How peaceful looked the Valley of Deyrah Dhoon, below us a thousand feet, and yet a mile higher than the tall trees over which it appeared to be sailing, swooped the golden eagle. Here from the yellow barberry bush, flew the cuckoo, hoarse with months of calling. Still, down we went, following the windings of the sloping road. Now came the first breath of warm wind we had felt for many a long day, and with it Rajpore. Some tiffin, a buggy, and we wish good bye to the stout old pensioner keeping the hotel.

Five miles more over a good road shaded with bamboo and mango; and as the reddening clouds tell of approaching sunset, we arrived at Deyrah. Then comes the arrangement of the dooly, the settling of loads with the half-naked bearers, the tenth quarrel made up, the horrible torch made blaze; and lighting our cheroot, we share the heat of our conveyance, with myriads of flying bugs, sting-

ing ants, and other animals called into life by the rains, and to activity by the lighted torch.

There is this difference between our coming and going. In August all was water and heat, now it was heat without the water. Towards midnight, a cool breeze would spring up, and then perhaps until aroused by the lighted torch in the face, and the word "buxis," would we sleep soundly. Now came the old scenes. White Cawnpore with its ravines of Kunkur, then the roaring Ganges, anon the lofty minarets of Lucknow, and two long nights more brought us to Alumpoor.

There was but little perceptible change, my house and the mess looked white and new; others were now being completed, and a few hedges had been planted. Dunderhead had rebuilt his room, and was now in his own house, some of our out-houses had been washed in, and poor Stumps looked pale and ill. This, however, I found to be the case with almost every officer present; and attributable to the exposure they had had during so unhealthy a season.

For a few days after my return I was laid up with fever, and paid but little attention to the duties of my office. On my recovery, I found a goodly number of petitions awaiting my perusal and signature, and by their contents, saw that either our rule was not sufficiently strict to keep the strong from oppressing the weak, or that the small farmer was as ever a victim to his more powerful neighbour.

Often as a Sepoy has given me a petition, and begged that I would use my influence in getting it forwarded directly into the hands of the magistrate Sahib, would he declare that justice was harder to get than ever, and that in their villages the poor man was nothing bettered. When I have told him in reply, that my influence was nil; and that the signature of myself and commanding officer was all that his petition could receive, would he say "that then it would never reach."

Many a time have I been told, that there was greater difficulty in having a complaint heard and settled, than when Sleeman Sahib was Resident. Now said they, there is but one sahib in the district, and his court is surrounded by Mahomedans from Lucknow, Cawnpore, and Baboos from the Punjaub. Then come thousauds of their relations, who are, burkandazees, chuprassies, thanahdars, molvis and moonshees. Through all these fellows' hands does the petition pass, and none but a rich man can make his prayer come to the Sahib's ears. The poor man cannot afford to bribe, his only source of wealth has been in the estate taken from him by his stronger neighbour, and although he is told that the white man gives justice, yet to him all is injustice still.

CHAPTER XXI.

THAT this was often the case I knew well, and that much dissatisfaction had arisen in consequence, I gathered by so frequently conversing with both native officers and men. Many a poor man was unable to get his petition registered; and as the time came round for the closing of all claims, the man, once full of hope, saw but increased misery and tyranny. That many of the more sensible men were aware that the villainy was perpetrated by their own race, I knew; still they could not but think, that the civilian, or as often the military man in civil employ, by giving up their judgment and authority to the native officials, was not doing his duty, but even sometimes connived at the imposture. Often have they told me, how grateful they would be, were the hangers-on fewer, and European agency scattered over the country.

"From the Sahib logue," they would say, "justice is obtainable, but from our people, just the reverse. From the native magistrate to the jail darogah, all take bribes; and as those who plundered

our property before you came are the richest, so they will pay best to be allowed to retain it."

This was very dreadful to think upon; and many a talk I had with Waller and Morris on the subject. They agreed with me that our system was wrong; but until the uncovenanted service was increased, and thanadars made from this class, instead of natives, that the present evil would exist.

"I believe," said Morris, "that this difficulty of access to the civil authority exists in every part of India, although in the Punjaub less than anywhere; and the reason why it is less common there, is because there is a larger European agency; those in authority are younger men, and there are no rich old civilians choking with pride and satisfaction at their position and immunity from censure."

"'Magnificent John' there makes men work; and instead of a fray in a village, or a complaint being handed over to a chuprassie for a searching inquiry to be made into it, Mr. Assistant Commissioner Nobody jumps upon his horse, and after a thirty mile ride, settles the matter on the spot; reporting the circumstances direct to his superior."

"But here," I said, "in Oudh, the Punjaub system is introduced, and there are lots of young military men in civil employ."

"Worse luck for their regiments," replied Morris. "There are some, but not many; but all the old

towns, and the larger districts are assigned to North-west civilians, and no more can they shake off their old system, than they dare discharge any of the thousands of followers they have brought over with them."

"Would you employ men of the country?" asked Stumps.

"Certainly," replied Morris, "their local knowledge must be greater than that of strangers; and as they are not so well up to the weak side of the employer, might do their duty, fearing to lose their places."

"In the Punjaub," I said, "all the chuprassies and burkundars are, I know, Hindostanis, and yet the people do not complain."

"How do you know that?" asked Stumps, "one thing, the Sikh is a gallant independent fellow, and would as soon as not thrash the sleek-looking chuprassie, if he went so far as he does in the provinces."

"I think," said Morris, "things are very queer all over India. We hear now of nothing but discontent. I am convinced Persia would never have dared to go to war with us, had she not been backed up by Russia, and there are agencies at work sowing the seeds of discontent from north to south. The natives certainly think we are taking away their caste, and really seem to me to take more interest in Turkey and Russia than ever I knew them to do.

I am sure our Sepoys do not care now about being dismissed the service, and are not so respectful to their officers."

"Oh, that is because they have no power," broke in Waller. "Even guard punishment is done away with. As to their caste, I hate it; and so, I believe, do they in their hearts."

"So they may," said Morris, "but until we became more of a Christian crew in this country, we used to bolster it up for them in every possible way, and by our enlisting nothing but high caste Brahmins and Mussulmen, shewed how we appreciated the priesthood. Now-a-days we don't consider these things. First of all we packed an army across the Caubul river; and to pass this river is defilement to the Hindoo. Indeed, I know that all those employed in Caubul are to this day treated, more or less, as outcasts. Then came Scinde, and mutiny. After this, the Punjaub, and something very like mutiny again. Latterly, Mr. Sepoy has had his feelings hurt by the large admission of Sikhs into the ranks, against whom he is obliged to rub shoulders, and in whom the very touch is defilement; for remember our bearded, dirty friend, the Sikh, eats flesh and gets drunk. Then we have used our armies in Burmah; their eyes and noses, on board steamers, being offended with their beloved cow, handed past them in a salted state for the use of the crew; and, lastly,

we have ordered, that, for the future, any man entering our service shall go to wherever the Government likes to send him."

"And very right, too. Don't you think so?" asked the Adjutant.

"Why, yes, perhaps; but I am not talking of that. I am only giving certain reasons for discontent. We raised an army, supporting to the utmost one of their cherished ideas, namely, caste; and now finding it a bother, want to destroy it. We were wrong to have been so absurd about it at first; and now I think we are foolish to run off abruptly into the opposite direction. If we were strong enough, and had a non-caste army at hand, we might then dare these Brahmins to shew further discontent; but as all the Bengal army, and most of the Bombay is recruited from this Oudh—a country, as we see, swarming with fanatics, and as you, Mr. Interpreter, know is mentioned in the Mahabaret, and called Adjudra—I think we should look before we leap."

"Then," said Stumps, "you believe in all those newspaper reports, and think that the discontent at Barrackpore is shared by the whole army. Why, it is only the 34th Native Infantry that is bad, and they have been disbanded once before."

"I certainly think that the whole army think as the 34th do, some, perhaps, more than others; and

wish that a most severe example were made of some of the mutinous scoundrels."

"Bother this croaking!" I said. "Who is going to the depôt with the men to learn the Minié rifle exercise?"

"Staunton," said Waller. "He asked to go, and as he knows something of mathematics, the Colonel thought he would be the best to send."

"So do I," said Morris. "This Minié will be a fearful weapon in a soldier's hands. I was down at target practice the other day, and was shewing its power off to the men; they seemed struck with it. My pay havildar shot beautifully with it, as did several Sepoys of the companies there. They all wanted to be armed with them, and seemed fully to appreciate their value."

"When armies use these weapons, cavalry will be useless, and artillery must either be rifled, too, or play only long bowls," said Waller.

"There is a row now about the cartridges at Barrackpore; the Sepoys declare that there is something mixed up in the patch fat that interferes with their caste," I said.

"A parcel of stuff!" said Waller. "Some low caste brutes in Calcutta have been trying to sow dissension, and have been telling the Sepoys that in using these cartridges they lose their caste. I believe that it is some of the lower class of men trying

to make themselves equal with the higher, and so try to do so, by insinuating that all caste is destroyed."

"Our men went away willingly enough, did they not?" asked Morris from Waller.

"Willingly was no name for it! Numbers of non-commissioned officers and plenty of Sepoys asked to go to the depôt, and we only sent the number ordered by the chief, these by far the best shots in the regiment."

"Well, all is very incomprehensible" said Morris, breaking up our party and going home. "I cannot make it out! That there is a storm brewing, I feel certain. I have thought so long before we ever took this country, Oudh, and now this sort of sullen lull of the army makes me dread the future. I think the Sepoys will always be staunch, and remain by their officers; but that there is a wish for independence, a desire to throw off our yoke, I feel assured, and know that before long we shall have to meet in fair fight all the discontented princes and their armies."

"I am ready for them," said Waller. "I dare say the old 75th will remain true to their salt."

"That they will!" I added; and we left the mess for our quarters.

CHAPTER XXII.

With the cold weather came a few parades. Dunderhead, at last, seeing the bad state of discipline the regiment had got into, resolved to get rid of it; but not being a particularly good drill himself, gave over the regiment to Morris and the Adjutant. Under their command the regiment became more steady.

Colonel Dunderhead had lost much of his old asperity of manner, and his suspicions regarding his junior officers. By some means or another he discovered that they had the welfare of the corps as much at heart as he had; and that the persons likely to best know their men would be officers of companies. His old favourite, the Havildar-major, had lately rather showed the cloven hoof even before him; and this, with other smaller matters coming daily to light, made him perceive that his Adjutant was correct in his judgment.

There were but three ladies present with the regiment; and for them dull enough was this

Christmas. They had remained in the hills until their husbands had finished house-building, and now by their presence enlivened our little station. Of course with so limited a society there could be no parties; but nevertheless many a pleasant evening was spent in the society of these l dies: besides themselves, music and tea being the only inducements. We bachelors when not on duty, obtaining a day or two as leave, would go shooting or fishing; meeting from the people of the country every kindness and assistance.

In the regiment itself there was a sort of sympathy with the now almost mutinous regiments at Barrackpore. They—the Sepoys—would tell us, that the conduct of these was wrong; but still I could see that they scarcely thought so. Often would I see the men gathering in little knots, and listening with pleasure to some Fakeer or Yogi, who would be less violent and probably cease speaking altogether when I approached.

That all saw there was an ill feeling abroad, there was no denial; but that it would go further, few imagined. The men were orderly and well-behaved; turned out to parades and drill with alacrity, and did all their duties cheerfully and well.

Sometimes they would ask questions about the Queen-mother in England; and knew from other sources than our information, as to what she was

doing there. Of the King in Calcutta they apparently cared not to know. The Ranee had an interest for them, and that was most probably increased by editorials in native newspapers, and translations from the speeches of Major Bird. This Major Bird was known to them well, partly from his having for years held a civil appointment at Lucknow, but chiefly from his being the paid advocate of the Oudh family. Major Bird, and his associate Captain Sardines, did their duty to their employers; but whether as Englishmen, and one a British officer, I leave others to judge.

The discontent daily increased. Now came reports of an ill feeling at rifle depôts. Some of the regiments in passing through Umballah and Sealkote refused to have anything to say to their fellow-soldiers, who had been sent four months before to the School of Instruction. Were they not outcastes? And had they not torn paper greased with the fat of cows and pigs, and thus made Christians of themselves? Then passed round that mysterious cake. On it went from village to village, carried by the hand of a Brahmin. To eat some of it, was to agree to obey the orders of the sender; but we slumbered still. The newspapers took it up, but were pooh-poohed as alarmists. The civil authorities saw nothing in it, and the heads of departments at Agra requested no further search should be made in the matter.

Another week, and we are told that the cartridge question had been taken up by Government; but not before open mutiny showed itself in the 19th Native Infantry at Berhampore; and that at Barrackpore the 34th looked on whilst a Sepoy hacked at his Adjutant on parade. Would the Government yet be aroused, and on arrival of the 19th at Barrackpore, open fire upon them; and show that mutiny shall not be carried on with impunity? No; as April came the papers told us that the regiments were disbanded; and a proclamation sent to say that it was hoped this terrible example would have the desired effect.

Often as the nights again got warm, would I walk over to Morris, and instead of going to mess talk over the gloomy appearance of the future with him. I told him of my engagement with Amy, and how that alone kept me in this country of heat and ill feeling.

"Ah well," said he, "next year I go home, and settle down with my dear old mother. Perhaps by that time Mr. Jones may yield; and then we will go together."

"God knows," I said; "I really see little good I have obtained by returning. I am not well; and old Jones does not seem to give in a bit the more for my having come. If I feel ill next year, I will go with you and retire from the service—"

"What's that?" broke in the Major, hearing a

commotion in the lines, and seeing a bright light in the sky.

"Ag lugga—ag lugga!" "Fire!" called out our servants.

"Where?" I asked.

"In the Colonel's bungalow," replied a Sepoy passing us, as we ran out towards the light.

There was the usual scene at a fire; some few working, many talking, and most interfering with each other. However, the Sepoys rushed from the lines, and with their aid the flame was soon got under. An hour afterwards I returned with Morris to his house; and there, joined by Stumps, we talked over the cause of the fire.

"Do you think it was accidental?" asked Waller.

"Heaven knows," replied Morris. "Fires are so frequent now, that I do not know what to think. Look how the houses at Barrackpore and Umballah have been burnt night after night, and that by the Sepoys.

"Yes," said Waller; "there they have got up grievances, and the men are annoyed about these greased cartridges, but here the fellows are as happy as the days are long. Why, look how the men rushed to put it out."

"Yes, that they did," I said. "But still some of the evil-disposed fellows might have done it. It is a favourite way of the men to show spite. Do you

not remember what came out after the investigation about those fires in the bazaar: there was no doubt they were caused by the friends of those men dismissed the service, and done to injure the Chowdry and other witnesses?"

"I hope," said Morris, "the mischief is not spreading here. I do not like the sullen way the men do their work. These cakes have some bad meaning in them. There is more in the greased cartridges than people think; and the insubordination of the whole army is distinctly visible. Look at the cartridges refused by the 19th Native Infantry: they were old ones, had been in their magazine for years; so their excuse for mutiny on that head was absurd. Then look at these rascally Fakeers going about. There was one I saw a short time since go through the lines: he was reverenced by all. The half-naked, ash-covered fanatic, was seated on an elephant, and had a large retinue—that means something. Then, if we can believe what we hear, it seems that when some regiment marched into Umballah, two men belonging to it, a Havildar and Naick, who had been learning the new Minié rifle exercise at the depôt, went out to meet their comrades; and what was the result? They were not received, but treated as outcastes. They complained to the Adjutant, Martineau, and I hear after inquiry these two men are actually pitched into for making a fuss about trifles. Loss

of caste is no trifle; and that all these depôt men are considered outcastes is notorious. Pshaw, if they were not, why should they all have nine months' leave to their homes; be sent direct from the depôt, and not be allowed first to rejoin their regiment? Oh, how I wish the Government would stir themselves! We are sitting upon a volcano."

"They took the order about dismissing the regiments easily enough," said Waller.

"Why," I said, "I never noticed that the men ever took much interest in any order. They love their pay, and an order to clip that would hurt their tenderest feelings, and really excite attention. I hear that the correspondence of the 34th and 19th has been intercepted, and that the whole army is more or less implicated in this cartridge question."

"Well, I'll bet that the old 75th don't mutiny," said Stumps, lighting his cheroot, and walking home with me.

"Good night, Major," I said, going off; "the old corps will never disgrace itself, I feel assured."

"I hope not," replied the Major; and we left him. Neither the Adjutant nor myself speaking further on the subject.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEXT day I received a note from the Colonel requesting that I would accompany the Adjutant to his quarters, as he wished to speak to me on regimental matters. I replied that I would do so; and after breakfast, putting on my uniform, we rode over to him. As I had often received similar notes, and found that my presence was only required to interpret, or to account for some item in the weekly report, I was unprepared for the communication made; which was, that seditious letters had been found on the parade ground; that at Lucknow great discontent had showed itself; and that some of the native officers had come early in the morning to complain that the cartridges received by us in October from the Cawnpore magazine were of a different paper, and looked more greasy than the old ones.

"What can I do, Colonel?" I asked.

"I wish to consult both yourself and the Adjutant. I would ask Major Morris to come too, but

fear giving the matter too serious an appearance. I do think that this cartridge question is spreading, and that they have been talking about it in the lines, and looking at the cartridges in use, or why should the native officers have come to me?"

"It looks bad," said Waller. "Shall we have a committee upon them, composed of native officers?'

"Well, suppose they say they are different, and greased with this pigs' fat, what am I to do then?"

"Destroy every one of them," I replied.

"The Government will make me pay for them," said the Colonel.

"If it does, Colonel," Waller replied, "the whole regiment will share the expense. Anything is better than giving these fellows a handle to lay hold of."

"Then, Captain Villars, would you go to the lines, and tell the men that the cartridges are the same as they have always had, but that they shall have a committee of native officers chosen by themselves, and that if they like to condemn the cartridges they shall all be destroyed? Explain well to them that the Government cannot wish to take away their caste, and do your best to make them all happy."

I went immediately to the lines, and found few of the men in their huts, but collected together in bands of about a dozen, somewhat excited and noisy. On seeing me, some retired; but the others, collecting in a mass around, listened with

respectful attention to what I had to say. I told them that they were to choose their own committee, and that, beyond receiving the report, no officer would have anything to say to the proceedings; and then, having arranged this, and telling the Tindal before them to allow the magazine to be thoroughly and completely examined by the native officers, I remained under the shade of the quarter guard, explaining how absurd was the idea of these being different cartridges from any previously received; and how still more absurd it was to imagine that so great a Government as ours could wish to injure any of their subjects, more particularly to alienate the affections of an army that had won them everything.

It was nearly sunset before I left; and, burning with fever from the intense heat and excitement, I returned to tell the result of my efforts to the Colonel.

I had not much to tell. The men were respectful, and had chosen five native officers, to whom I gave the key of the magazine. My remarks about the Government had been taken in good part; but I could see by the whisperings and shakes of the head of many that all was not fully believed. This settled, I went to mess, and there talked over all our hopes and fears, never supposing that the stolid, indifferent-looking, apathetic Mahomedan servant behind each chair was greedily taking in

every word, and would—notwithstanding the firm belief held that not one of these servants understood English—repeat the conversation very correctly to many an eager listener.

That night there were two fires, one in the Bazaar and one in the Mess-house. The first was easily extinguished, but not so the other; for, notwithstanding the exertions of the Sepoys and of all the officers, it could not be got under, and by morning we saw our property a heap of ashes.

That it was the work of an incendiary we were certain; and the fire occurring at the same time in the Bazaar looked suspicious.

Both houses were undoubtedly fired by the same parties, and the destruction of the Mess-house insured by attention being taken away from it to the Bazaar. Waller was much injured in trying to save the mess-plate; so seriously as to be obliged to go on the sick-list; and leaving me to include his duties in my own.

Next day I attended morning drill; and although all went on as usual, I saw in several instances quiet insubordination. The guards were not ready for the officer of the day; and the Havildar-major gave me no very satisfactory reason for the cause.

On attending at the Colonel's quarters, I was informed of the decision of the committee of native officers: they had condemned some cartridges, and the others they agreed were the same as formerly issued.

"There is no difference in any, Colonel," I said; "and now that they make out that there is, they will never relinquish the idea that they were mixed by order of Government."

"I can't help it," he said. "I have done my best, and hoped they would either approve of all, or condemn all. Things are very queer. By heavens! I think we are going to have a general mutiny. That Mess-house catching fire last night was done by some of these dissatisfied people. And now there is a new complaint. Has the Bazaar Chowdry been to you?"

"I saw him outside your house. But what has he to complain of?" I asked.

"He declares that just now the men came into the Bazaar, and refused to eat the attah brought from the town; as they said that the Commissioner had, by order of Government, mixed bone-dust with it," said the Colonel.

"Anything to quarrel about," I replied. "They got this cry up at Seetapore the other day. I will, if you like, go to the Bazaar, and try to reassure the men."

"Very well; but you look very feverish, so do not expose yourself. The doctor tells me you are far from well, and that Waller was very much burnt last night."

"He was," I replied. "But one cannot afford to be sick in times like these. I must be off to the

Bazaar; and will take the Chowdry with me. I think the men believe me, and will do as I wish."

Thus saying I rode away to the Bazaar and found it in commotion, and its streets paraded by angry Sepoys.

"There is bone-dust in the attah," said the spokesman of a group of some hundred men.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Because it is small grained," said one. "It is so light," said another. "We are being poisoned," said the many; and I saw that to argue with each separately was useless. Seeing some native officers near, I called to them by name; and requested they would explain to the men that there was no truth in the report, but that it was circulated by men of bad characters and low caste, who wishing to raise themselves to the higher, had circulated this report for the purpose of making out that all caste was destroyed. This seemed to be believed; and on being explained to the men received a ready assent. Most of them returned to their lines, saluting me as they passed. Feverish and ill, I returned to the Colonel, and told him how successful I had been; and then, doubtful in my own mind as to where these things would end, retired to my own house and bed.

Next day I was too ill to go to parade, and left my work there to be performed by the Sergeant-major, who in coming to report to me after-

wards, asked me, "Had I heard the news from Meerut?"

"No," said I, "Sergeant; what is it?"

"The Cavalry there, Sir, refused these cartridges, were tried and sent to prison. Afterwards, on Sunday, the other black fellows having broken out, relieved these men, were joined by the other native regiments, and killed every officer, lady, and white person they saw."

"Good heavens," I said, getting off the bed, "has it already begun? What did the European troops do, Sergeant?"

"Followed them up some distance; but somehow in the night the men got away to Delhi."

"Have we thrashed them there then, Sergeant? And how did you hear all this?" I asked.

"There is a Delhi Extra, a slip of paper, I saw at the Colonel's. It only says that the mutineers left Meerut; but they had not got to Delhi, nor should I think they would go there."

"I must dress, and away to the Colonel's. Do you think the men know of this?" I asked.

"No, Sir; I really am not sure. They all are so impertinent now, that if they did it would not alter their behaviour," said the Sergeant.

"Well, don't say a word to anybody about the news, and I will go over to the Major first, and then to the Colonel's," I said, dismissing the man.

I was soon dressed; and after a whispered con-

versation with poor Waller, who, though now better, was kept to his bed, I went on to see Morris and ascertain if he also had received the Meerut news.

He was just coming over to me, as he had been shut up with the Colonel and Captain Wigens for the past two hours. From what had occurred at Meerut—the almost open mutiny of some of the troops at Lucknow, and the unsettled state of our own regiment—it had been determined to send all the ladies and Sergeant-major's wife into Lucknow; as a European regiment being there, it was considered safe from anything beyond discontent, and we without them would then be freer to act whichever way things went.

To this I could not but assent; and as proceeding onwards in my feverish state would do me injury, I remained with Morris, supposing that if my opinion was wanted it would be asked. That night the dāks were laid; and with many a bitter tear, and many a dread that there was misery in the future, did our four Englishwomen obey orders, and start for Lucknow.

It was no easy thing to get these women to leave their husbands; they wished to share the danger. Had they not been with them when adversity was far away? and now were they forced to leave? Such was each wife's appeal to remain; but it could not be allowed. If it should come to flight, it were

easier for one to escape, and that a man, than for two, and one of these a tender female.

Next day came news of Delhi,—the army going over "en masse," murdering their officers, and proclaiming the king as Sultan of India. Nor was this all we heard. Lucknow had committed itself. The people were against us; and after an address on the parade-ground by Sir Henry Lawrence to the troops, they were still dissatisfied; and gloomy indeed was all around.

There was inspection parade that evening; and frequently as I passed down each company with the commanding officer did I hear the word "Delhi." From this hour I saw our power was gone; and the 75th waited but to join their mutinous comrades.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NEXT morning, as usual, I attended the drill: all went on quietly. Even recruits came and offered themselves, and, finding them the proper height, I sent them to be examined by the doctor. It was odd to me,—some parts of the army in open mutiny, all complaining of the insults put upon their religious views, and yet offering themselves as recruits. Verily and indeed was I puzzled. Until Waller was able to resume his duties as Adjutant, I would morning after morning attend parades, feeling that no longer was I master there; and frequently expecting some fanatic Sepoy to take my life. As I walked alone on that sandy parade-ground, acknowledging with a nod the reports made to me, how my thoughts would wander! Here were we, a mere handful of officers, trying to hold together some eleven hundred men ripe for mutiny. Often when turning almost mechanically to correct some movement more than ordinarily careless, I would check myself, knowing that my advice or order was useless; that all were biding their

time, and ere long my authority among them would cease. The feeling—the state of suspense—was dreadful; and I began at length to feel that, let it be for better or worse, any change would be beneficial.

Waller recovered and resumed his duties, feeling, as I had done, that the regiment had gone. Morris now came to live with us; and this, with the Colonel as a dining member, constituted our mess. How changed was all from past times! No longer the song, the joke, or even the Doctor's sad tales. Each looked upon the other as doomed; and as the day dawned, bold was the man that dared to say he expected to see it end.

Each day—each hour—brought further tidings of the spread of mutiny; Lucknow had gone, and now the garrison, reduced in number, were forced to entrench. This, we knew, would never be left for us to do. With us it could be but escape or death. Should the regiment stand staunch, then well, we lived. But when the hour of temptation came, and the dread cry raised by thousands of their fanatical blood-requiring brethren should be heard in our lines demanding our lives, where would all thoughts of past kindnesses be, but lost; and we, as even the very natives now feared not to say, murdered by the angered thousands?

The thought was dreadful; and often when sitting in the verandah of our small bungalow, talking

to the Colonel, Morris, or Waller, did I think the sigh of the night-wind through the bamboo trellis-work was but the signal for our destruction.

Long since had I written to Amy bidding her farewell for ever. I had written directly to her. I was aware of my promise; but now that there was no hope of our ever meeting, I broke it, and bade her farewell. Escape I felt I could not; and in bidding her good-bye in writing, I knew that even Jones would now not blame me.

Often would Morris tell me, as we met perhaps over the side of a well, down which, unobserved at midnight we had been casting plate or valuables, how much he loved his aged mother; and how his now near death would be her death.

Then returning arm-and-arm, talking seriously of a kingdom far away, though ever near, would we almost wish the time might come to end this dreadful tension. "Death, ay the worst of deaths," would Morris say; "but this expectation drives me to madness."

Still time wore on: the long hot month of May receded slowly; and yet the regiment, as said by their representatives the native officers, "were staunch, and would ever be so, to the salt they had eaten."

There was yet one day to June, and muster was on the 2nd, for the morrow was Sunday. The rolls were brought correctly; and as the few officers

present came to our house to service, few if any observed aught to make them doubt the men around. With night came the usual commotion in the lines; the dark figures passing the lurid blaze: but all was quiet; and in the deep murmurings of unhappy men passed away that sultry Sabbath night.

How dreadful was the state of suspense!—those long hot nights, as I lay under the punkah, its heavy flap awaking me with a start from my feverish sleep. "Was that a gun?" I would think; and cold with perspiration, peering through the darkness, expected to see the figures of my murderers. Thus passed this Sabbath night. The three of us had read before parting the Evening Service; and tired with fear and watching, each sought that rest, which not improbably would be for ever.

Hour after hour I had heard struck in the lines, still the hum of voices continued: at length exhausted nature could hold out no longer, and I awoke not until the second bugle had rung out the call for parade.

"Why did you not call me?" I asked the bearer as he brought me my sword; and, as usual, I placed my revolver in my waist-belt.

"I overslept myself, Sir," said he. "Your horse is ready, Sir, and turn to the right."

"Why," said I, "are the Major and Adjutant gone?"

"Yes, Sir, ride quickly," said the man, and with

a passing thought that his manner was rather odd, I galloped at speed to the parade-ground.

As I passed through the centre street of the lines I heard rather a heavy firing; and the ping of more than one bullet overhead said something unusual was occurring. Still I galloped on until clear of the lines: when before me in uniform, and scattered over the parade-ground were the Sepoys, occupied in shooting at and bayoneting their officers. Behind and around were hundreds of yelling fanatics thirsting for my blood, their arms red with that of my brother officers: here, as I galloped wildly about, not knowing which way to turn, I came upon the body of the Colonel, lying hacked and stiff near the carcass of his charger. Around, sometimes singly, and at another in a little heap of three, lay mangled other officers, their faces now pale in death. A volley in my face turned my horse; and seeing a figure, something like an officer, riding hard far away to the right, I endeavoured to overtake him. "Bagh, bagh, dina." "Fly, fly to the right," said a Sepoy of the Grenadier Company, placing his musket close to my back.

"Why?" I asked, seeing by the man's face that he was friendly; and slightly checking my horse as I spoke.

"Bagh dina," again said the man—"or I must kill you." And as if to hasten my departure, and make his murdering comrades think he was intent

upon taking my life, he fired his musket close behind me.

One hurried look I took at the man, and hearing the report of his musket, imagined that he had missed his aim, having found the temptation too much for him. But catching his eye, as I pressed my horse's side, I saw that the fired musket was to withdraw the suspicion of his comrades. Many were the shots sent after me by the maddened men. Some I think intentionally aimed low, for as I passed within but two yards, to have hit me would have been easy. Now, as I got near the Sergeant's bungalow, did one fellow try to seize my horse's rein, and in another moment was trampled under foot; the brave old Arab clearing the would-be murderer with a bound.

Bang, bang, came a couple of shots from an out-house; and I was nearly surrounded by a party of men; their hands and clothes stained red with the blood of some of the Sergeant's family, who had refused to go with the ladies to Lucknow. Dropping the reins, I drew my revolver, and as I fired, down fell, writhing in agony, the Havildar-major. Another shot at the few men with him, and I passed beyond their reach.

"Help me!" said a voice I knew to be the Major's; and drawing the rein slightly, I looked towards the spot from whence it came. The next instant, from behind some sticks, rushed Morris,

and simply saying "gallop," he seized the stirrup, and kept up with my horse's hand-gallop. A few random shots were sent at us by the party returning from the now burning bungalow, and we were clear.

It was no time for speaking, or being tired, and for four miles did Morris keep up with the cantering horse; then dismounting, I took his place, and with Morris in the saddle did the gallant animal pursue his way onwards. No word had been exchanged. Hot and tired though we were, still there was danger in one moment's delay. At last, exhausted, I fell; and then the rein was tightened. Tired and feverish, we withdrew from the open plain; and, under the shadow of some date trees, the old Arab and ourselves drank deeply from the small stream near.

The stream we drank from was one of those channels of irrigation so common in eastern countries. There, the well was worked by a native, sitting on the rope, and thus with his weight aiding the two bullocks to drag up, filled with water, the shining leather bucket. Now he rested for a moment, and in peace smoked his hookah, or pipe made of cocoa-nut shell, under the shade of the pepul tree, that kept us concealed from his view. In the intense heat of that tropical day in June, how quiet all appeared; and yet, eight miles away, what fearful things had occurred!

Little did the man before us care who were masters; he was born to cultivate; but it would not do to trust in him and ask for food. He might betray us. No; let him work; and we must, ere sundown, be miles away.

Thus musing, I was the first to break the long silence, and asked Morris to again be moving.

"Of course," he said, replacing the wet saddle on the horse, "we must go miles further than this."

"I am ready," I said; and after a moment's argument regarding who should ride, we again set forth, Morris walking.

Thus passed that dreadful day; sometimes I walked, then Morris rode, until the heat, fatigue, and fever, made us both unable to walk more. Mounting behind Morris, we yet hoped to force a few miles more, before sunset, out of the now tired and stumbling horse. Slow, indeed, was our pace, and sorely tripped the poor Arab over the broken ground, for we dared not be seen on the public road.

At length, low walls and prickly baubul trees forced us to take the more beaten tract, called a road; and before the dreadful sun had disappeared, we were some thirty miles from Alumpoor.

Wearied and ill, we had resolved to rest in the shade of the mango trees for the night, come what might; when, suddenly, we saw on the end of the road, standing out bright and plain against the

yellow evening sky, the figure of a European, leaning, as if wearied, over the shoulder of his horse. Another glance at the receding figure told me it was Waller, and the grey horse his charger. Now I knew that the person I had seen from the parade-ground was Waller, and, with a shout, we stopped his going further.

"Waller," I shouted, "come back! Here we are."

As he turned, we saw that before him was another officer, but lying with his face towards the ground, and to all appearance lifeless.

In another minute he had returned to the place where we were seated, and begging us to help the young fellow in front of him from off the horse, he told us by what means he had escaped.

The young fellow, so helpless and nearly insensible, was named Dansey, and had only joined the regiment a few days before the outbreak. When the massacre began he had escaped in the confusion, but not until he had received a bullet in the chest. Notwithstanding this he had staggered some distance, and was picked up by Waller as he galloped from the parade-ground.

It appeared that they had followed much the same route as ourselves, drinking water occasionally. At first Waller walked, until the increasing weakness of Dansey necessitated his getting upon the horse, so as to hold his brother officer in an upright

position. They had resolved to stop just when my voice was heard calling on Waller to do so.

"Water, water," feebly gasped the dying boy, lying in his blood-stained uniform on the hard dusty ground. "Oh, do give me some water!"

With some difficulty, in a slight hollow, half concealed by long spear grass and rank vegetation, we found a few quarts of muddy liquid. This, in my helmet forage-cap, did I offer to poor Dansey, and for some time he was quiet and easier. Whilst the boy was silent we talked over the escape; and at the bidding of Morris drew a little on one side, and there, as the shades of evening crept upon the scene, and made the gloom of the mango trees appear doubly dark, did we three tired, fever-stricken men kneel, and, following the words of Morris, offer up a prayer to the Giver of all goodness for his infinite mercy in sparing us thus far. Then returning to Dansey we found that he had moved, and in his delirium was recalling school-boy days. It was a dreadful thing to hear that poor youth, hardly yet eighteen, talk of the land far away. Here with us was he under an Indian sun, flying from an angered nation, and, perhaps, but by a few days anticipating a far better death than that reserved for us. To cool his raging thirst he had yet a fellow countryman, whilst we, yet unhurt, might be left for greater pains. Now his cries increased, and we moved him nearer into the darkening shade, for we feared the

passing traveller. Presently he grew calmer; and as the sun sank below the horizon, it seemed as if Nature had restored to him his wandering senses.

"Waller, Waller," said he; and, clutching the hand of the Adjutant as he hastened to his side, he continued, "I must die; thank—pray—" and before the half-finished sentence was disclosed, the poor young officer's spirit had fled to Him that gave it.

A few moments' silence ensued, as the three of us leant over the lifeless body of poor Dansey. Each looked into the now meaningless eyes of our comrade. In him I saw one more victim to this mutiny, and dreaded that my own turn would come. It was a dark future that loomed before us, and which way to turn we knew not. The pawing of our tired horses, as they in their thirst and hunger scratched the ground, aroused me from my reverie, and I got up to loosen the old Arab's bridle, relieving him of the saddle. This Waller did to his, and, filling my hat again with water from the hole, we led the poor animals there to drink. Soon it was sucked to the very mud, and then breaking down leafy branches, and tearing up some of the rank grass about, we managed to give them something towards satisfying hunger.

"We must move further from the road," said Morris. "Our horses will draw attention from any passing traveller."

"But what are we to do with poor Dansey?" said Waller.

"Bury him," I said.

"Yes, but how, in this hard dry soil? Why we could not scrape a hole four inches deep in twelve hours. By-the-by, shall we put him into the old water-hole, and hide his body with grass and leaves?" asked the Major.

This was agreed to, and the pale corpse was soon hidden beneath mud and grass. We buried him in his uniform, and at my suggestion placed our own red jackets with him, these articles of dress being not only very hot, but rendering us too conspicuous objects to travel on unperceived and unmolested. This, however, we did not do until some time after we had buried Dansey, for I should never have noticed the fact of the tell-tale jacket, had it not been for the brightness of Waller's as it shone in the last rays of evening.

CHAPTER XXV.

All this had taken some time; and, moving ourselves and horses deeper into the shade of the mango grove, we made plans for the future. Morris was the chief speaker: he appeared hopeful, and spoke as if in our first escape most of our danger had passed; but Waller and myself thought otherwise, and I dreaded the fearful future.

Morris proposed that we should do our best to reach the hills, and then trust to something turning up; to take care of our horses, and let them have as much food as they could get; for with their assistance we could get over the ground quicker, and probably anticipate the news of the outbreak at Alumpoor.

"But if we stay here we shall be overtaken and murdered," said Waller, "for the whole regiment saw me ride away; and I picked up Dansey a very short distance in front of the fellows."

"I am for pushing on," I said. "Dead tired though I am, still this is too near. I dare say we

can find lots of places for concealment along the road; and as we get nearer the hills, there are scarcely any villages or travellers."

"Come along, then," said Morris, putting the saddle again on my wearied horse, and Waller doing the same to his. "We shan't be able to go far, I can see."

Silently in our white trousers and shirt-sleeves did we stumble along that broken road, each in turn leading a jaded charger. No one did we meet; and as the morning rose bright and clear, we retired, worn out with hunger, excitement, and fatigue, into the dark recesses of an immense mango grove. The distant streak of light, some two miles away, showed how far it extended; and in that distance we trusted for safety. A few moments were given up by us to unsaddling, and tying up with the rein the fore-feet of our horses. Then a hasty wander round to see that we were alone; and in another moment, throwing ourselves upon the ground, we slept soundly.

I was awoke at daybreak by the noise of parrots and crows, they evidently being somewhat astonished at visitors in their grove. At first I was unable to distinctly collect my senses. The past appeared a horrible dream; and it was not until casting my eyes around, and seeing Morris and Waller still sleeping, that I fully recognised my dreadful situation. Both appeared to sleep so

soundly, that I resolved not to awaken them; but getting first on my elbow, and then fully shaking off the weariness of my yesterday's travel, I went off to untether the horses. Poor brutes! they had not moved far, but were quietly grazing on the dead leaves and scanty herbage around.

Hungry and thirsty, I returned to where Morris and Waller lay. They were still sleeping; and by the heaving of the breast and clenched hands of Waller, his dreams were, I could see, none of the pleasantest.

"Stumps," I called out, pushing him slightly with my foot, "wake up, man, and get the Major there to tell us how to find something to eat, for I am dying with hunger."

"Good morning," said Morris, waking up. "My heavens! what dreadful scenes those were yesterday. But it is no time for thinking and talking. Mind, no more 'Major' to me, please. God knows how long I may be allowed to keep it. I have heard what Villars said, and would very much like to find something to eat also. But first let us reconnoitre, see about the horses, and ask a blessing from the Creator on our future movements."

This we did; and on returning to the place where we had entered the grove the previous evening, saw that the country around us was one vast plain, studded with large mango groves; whilst far away, only a dim outline, rose the lower range of

hills. To reach these we resolved; and retreating once again into the darkness of the wood, consulted each other as to the best means of doing so, and what we were to do for food and water.

"I have a pistol," I said, "and lots of ammunition in my pouch; but I can't kill these crows and parrots with bullets. Besides, I should be afraid that the report of the pistol might be heard by any passer-by."

"Well, we can't starve," said Waller. "Bother the niggers hearing. If we are to be starved to death, it is as well to be murdered at once; and I have my pistol also, so we would polish off a lot of the villains before they finished us."

"No, no," said Morris, thoughtfully. "We won't use our fire-arms until obliged; and, please God, they may never have to be used in self-defence; but keep them loaded for that. Look here, we had better now move on a few miles, and stop when done up. These mango groves will give us shelter, and, perhaps, on the way we may meet with water. Don't you think we could somehow dodge these squirrels running all about?"

"I don't see any," I said, feeling inclined to despair; and in my own mind seeing very little chance of our ever reaching the hills.

"Supposing we reach these hills," said Waller; "what then?"

"Heaven only knows," said Morris. "I think

the Nepaulese may be friendly, for the Goorkhas at Simla after a bit went with Anson to Umballah. It is our only chance. All Oudh is, I feel sure, against us, and I doubt Rohilcund; they were very unsettled weeks before our villains broke out. Now then let us start." And after saddling our horses we were once again on the road.

Sometimes as we proceeded we heard the voices of men, and at wells the creaking of the Persian wheels, which was instantly the signal for the party to stop, and with two hiding, the other was sent to reconnoitre, and find out some path or method by which we could pass them unnoticed. Once or twice we saw above the trees huts and temples, showing that a village was near; and then for many a weary mile would we wander to the right or left in our efforts to avoid observation. More than once had Waller proposed and I seconded a descent on one of these villages, and, as we had no money to purchase, to force the inhabitants to save us from famishing. But Morris would not. In such a proceeding he could see nothing but ultimate destruction; for it would not only raise enemies, but put the hellhounds on our track. Now as we passed near a well, and with anxious eyes from our place of concealment watched the tired bullocks and unsuspecting native keeping them, we drank deeply from the warm stream irrigating the Bagerah crop amongst which we were hid. Here for three hours

did we remain; our tired and quiet horses busy in eating the wholesome green food, and we extracting some nourishment from the stalks, for not yet was there an ear of grain in the crops around.

"Let us start," said Morris, "for near this cultivation there must be some villages;" and with one long drink we were again dragging our blistered feet over the clods of mud. Two miles more, and we determined to seek shelter for the rest of the day in a grove; and there tethering our horses we endeavoured to catch some of the squirrels running up and about the trunks of the fine old trees under whose shadow we reclined. Between the three of us, and with the help of clods of mud, we had managed to slaughter two of these little animals; and ere long, skinned and cleaned, they were roasting before the little fire we raised by means of our pistols. The two little animals were but a mouthful each; still they served to partly satisfy our dreadful hunger, and now worn out, we forgot our dangers in sleep.

How long we had been sleeping I know not; but when awoke by Waller with the intelligence that his horse had neighed, and that probably some people were near, I felt refreshed, and willing enough to go with Waller and see where the animals were. We found them some distance away enjoying the green grass of an empty water-course. How I envied their capabilities in so easily finding food, for now I felt more hungry than ever, and burning with

thirst. Continuing our search for the cause of the animal's neighing, we stumbled upon an old well; and by twisting boughs together and tying them here and there with portions of linen torn from our shirts, we managed to make a very fair rope, and long enough, with my helmet foraging-cap fixed to its end, to reach the water below. This water we found fresh and sweet; indeed we considered it delicious, and drinking deeply, reserved the remainder for Morris, to whom we now returned.

It being near sunset, Morris thought we should again be moving, we having resolved from henceforth only to move at dusk, until we reached the hills; but as we might not find water again on the road, it was determined to draw as much as was necessary for the horses, and, drinking ourselves, quit this hiding-place, and make for the hills, which now were distinctly seen on the horizon. This we did; and, mounting the horses, Waller and myself followed after Morris, who had gone on some distance to the edge of the wood to reconnoitre. Just as we were coming out on to the open plain, Morris signalled for us to return; and as his violent gestures and crouching form told us danger was near, we dismounted, and leading our horses, were once again buried in the grove.

After a while Morris returned, and in whispers told us that he had been watching two natives cook-

ing their evening meal at a fire made by themselves under a mango tree; and had, by creeping on all fours, and hiding behind the trunks of trees, been enabled to get near enough to them to overhear their conversation. The natives were travel-stained and tired, and had mentioned to each other the advisability of passing the night under the trees over their heads. It appeared that they had come from Alumpoor, and were going to their homes, though where these were Morris could not catch. They were present at the mutiny, and spoke of it as very cruel; but, fatalist like, said it was all right or it would not have been. For a long time after this they were silent, and Morris thought to return; but suddenly one of them asked "whether all the Sahibs were killed?"

"I am sure I don't know," said the other; "I heard that two Sahibs got away, the Adjutant Sahib being one; and they took the road to Lucknow. Not that they will escape there," he added, "for the King has ordered all the Sahibs in the country to be killed."

"Bapery bap," said the other. "Will it be good or bad?"

"Heaven knows," was the reply. "Hum log ke wasti sub kooch utcha." "For us anything is good."

After this, putting up the little attah they had over after making their bread, they drew their light

blankets over them, and fell off to sleep. Seeing this, Morris returned to us in the grove, and there recounted the words he had overheard.

"Let's go in at them," said Waller; "you see they are just as bad as the Sepoys, and would tell upon us; I don't care a fig for shooting them both, and taking all their attah. It will serve us for bread then instead of them."

"Isn't it murder?" I asked, feeling an inclination to act upon Waller's suggestion; yet having some slight compunction about doing so.

"It is," said Morris, "and hang me if either of you shall touch them. Let them keep their attah, and we will feed on anything. The horses must be killed at last, and that is something. These poor tired fellows going to sleep there to be murdered by us! No, they are not likely to do harm. Moreover they think that we are going towards Lucknow, and will there be murdered. Let us leave them alone, and sneak off; we ought to be near the hills, if we travel all night, and make these horses go till they drop. It is only their lives against ours, and they can easily manage thirty miles in a night."

"What is there to expect in those hills?" asked Waller; "I am tired of them. I believe we shall go on in this way for a few days more, and then be caught and murdered in some village, or get eaten up by a tiger in the jungle before us."

"Let us move," said Morris, in a tone of autho-

rity; and despite Waller's grumbling at "not being allowed to knock a couple of would-be murderers on the head," we left the grove by another route, and riding and walking, forced thirty good miles out of the tired horses before the sun rose.

CHAPTER XXVI.

No longer before us lay cultivation and groves of mango trees, but all around was low rank jungle, with here and there some large-leafed dawk trees, about which were marks of wild pig. There was little shelter from the broiling sun in these trees, and less in the dried-up babul, with its boughs teeming with yellow doves. Tired and foot-sore, we rested under these for some time, until moved by hunger and thirst, we went in search of water. In ground a little lower than the rest, we found some stagnant stuff, green with three months' drought; but it was no time for being particular; so blowing the floating vegetation from the surface, we knelt down, and putting our lips to the puddle, drank vigorously. Again hobbling our horses, we took shelter for the day under such shade as the low trees about afforded. The dreadful burning sand had now given way to small-sized boulder stones, some loose and others fixed firmly in the white eye-aching sand all round. These were sad impediments to our

walking; and more than once had caused my old Arab to fall. Poor brute, he was too old for this kind of life, and had been too many years accustomed to the luxuries of corn and stabling, to be able to travel almost day and night, with little else than coarse grass. His master was not much better; I had never recovered the loss of my arm, and the fearful anxiety of the previous month had shaken me considerably. Moreover, I had never been quite free from fever since my return to India.

More than once as the day dawned I had latterly, more particularly on this day, felt callous as to whether I ever saw another. The aching of my head, pains in my limbs, and extreme tension of mind, were almost more than I could bear; and in the blue hills before me I saw little else than more misery, and eventually a lingering death. I had been sitting looking intently at the stones under me, and musing as to whether I ever again should see Amy, St. Helens, or even another face but that of a foe, when I was aroused from my reverie by feeling the hand of Morris placed upon my shoulder, and hearing him say in his old cheerful, happy voice, "Cheer up my boy, we're not done yet!"

"I am, though," I said; "I feel as if I could go no further; I wish that this dreadful state of things would end."

"Don't give way, my poor dear boy," said

Morris, clutching my arm, and looking into my eyes, now half closed with the tears which his kind voice had brought up. "Don't give way," he repeated; "I think all will be well yet. You are not strong, and want rest. See—whilst you were musing there, Waller and myself went round on a voyage of discovery for something to eat: and we have got some chameleons, two or three lizards, a frog, and some large grasshoppers, which Waller declared would be as good as locusts, which St. John lived upon; but I declined cooking them; and there they are all jumping away again as pleased as Punch. Now, as you are the weakest, you shall have the daintiest animal, the frog; and so cheer up, my boy—never say die."

It appeared to me selfish to continue dissatisfied; so, thanking him kindly, I helped to collect dry wood, and to make our queer-looking game-bag fit for cooking.

The chameleons and lizards we resolved to broil whole on the embers; but as the frog had much inside of him, we did him piecemeal; and most heartily did we feast on the good things before us. Before the meal was concluded, I was much better, and able to join in the laugh at Waller for wishing to eat grasshoppers.

"I don't see why they should not be good," said Waller; "I have seen Sepoys eat locusts in curry, and have heard that they are good; so I only hope,

if any day frogs and lizards are not come-at-able, we may get these grasshoppers."

"Try one," said Morris, catching one as it sprung on his dirty trousers; "it is rare squashy inside, and won't take long cooking."

"No; I am not hungry now," said Waller; "but when I am, woe betide the grasshoppers."

From this we went to rub the horses down, and give them water. Then seeking the thickest shelter we could see, regardless of wild hogs, tigers, snakes, or even man, we parted from our sorrows in sleep.

It was hours before I awoke. The hot, burning sun which had been at my back when I first lay down, was now well over to my feet. All around was stillness: Waller and Morris appeared yet to sleep, and not a sound broke on that hot afternoon but the cooing of the doves in the acacia trees near. Presently Morris looked up, and seeing me awake, asked how I was.

"Much better," I replied. "I want something to eat; those squirrels yesterday were not enough."

"Shall you be able to go to the foot of those hills to-night? for I want to do so, and then afterwards we can travel in the day-time. I know this jungle is full of tigers, for I have seen their marks; and would rather, when once away from the plains, and the chance of being observed by travellers, travel in the day-time."

"I am willing," I said. "If we keep close together with our horses, I do not think there is much fear from tigers. But what do you expect to get from entering the hills?"

"Villars," he replied, solemnly, "I feel it is our only chance, and have an inward conviction that Providence, who has hitherto been so merciful as to spare us only out of all the other officers, will not at last desert us. All around, you know, are enemies, and in Nepaul is our only chance of finding a friendly power. Jung Bahadoor went home some years ago, and may have discovered that England is powerful enough to crush this rising."

"Well, well," I said, "I know it is wrong in me to give way, but I do at times despair of ever seeing home again; and you know how much I have there to love and wish to see."

"I know it," said Morris; "and so have I, and so more or less has everybody. My mother loves me, you know; and do you think that she will take hearing of this outbreak quietly? It will, I truly believe, be her death; but I think it is wicked to anticipate misery. So long as there is life there is hope; and as your friend, and one that loves you, Villars, I must say, that in giving way you are not doing your duty either to the State or to us your companions."

"I will, then, avoid doing so, or at any rate

try," I replied; "but I am not what I used to be—buoyant with hope and high spirits. I got down in the mouth after losing my arm; and then this engagement, though really affording me the greatest happiness, still the constant annoyance and implacability of Amy's father has rendered me sensitive. Had it not been for the hopes of winning his consent to our union, I would not have returned to India, and thus have escaped these present horrors."

"Rather selfish, my boy, wishing to be left out of this dilemma; but never mind, you cannot recall what is past, so there can be no good regretting it Use the past as a beacon for the future; and take my advice, if ever you get out of this hobble, return home, and never be fool enough to see India again."

"Ah, if ever I do get home," I replied, "catch me coming back. But as Mrs. Glasse says, 'You must first catch your hare.'"

"What are you fellows jawing about?" said Waller, suddenly waking up from his heavy slumber.

"I am telling Villars not to give way," replied Morris.

"Our prospects are not very brilliant," said Waller, "and those blessed hills of yours will settle it; but, 'dum vivimus vivamus,' or, hold on by your eyelids, is my motto. I don't think those lizards quite agreed with me, or else that horrible water was queer, for I feel all the worse; so if you have

no objection, I will try and shoot a pig. Their marks show they are plentiful enough;" and taking his pistol in his hand, he sauntered off into the jungle.

Morris and myself continued talking together until the return of Waller, who was unsuccessful in seeing any wild pig, and went away to put the saddle on his horse, grumbling at his luck. At sunset we were again on the road, which was stony and broken. The bright moonlight was, however, in our favour; and in its whiteness we felt some protection from the tigers, which we knew were swarming around. Often did our horses stop and snort as they entered the dark shadows of over-hanging grass; but we could not afford to fear; and stumbling, tripping, and footsore, did we force them before daylight to the foot of the lowest range of hills. The last ten miles of our road had been accomplished with the greatest difficulty. The dense; primeval forest, with its gigantic creepers and prickly brushwood, delayed us sadly, and soon reduced our clothes to tatters. Often had we to work back and find some opening through the wall of dense vegetation before us. In it we knew lived horrors in thousands: not improbably under the thorny grass my foot was crushing was gliding the deadly cobra. But escape to the hills was our desire; and to attain this, all dangers must be undergone.

As there were yet some hours until morning, and the road no longer passable for horses, we resolved, with the aid of our pistols, to light fires, and in their light rest secure from wild animals until day-break.

There was not much trouble in finding dry wood; and so dragging some dead boughs on to the open space selected, we had ere long roaring fires: and although nearly suffocated with heat, and stung to death with myriads of insects brought to life or activity by the flame, we sat holding the bridles of our tired steeds until the sun rose.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AFTER rubbing down the horses and hobbling them, we each in different directions proceeded in search of food and water, but were unsuccessful. Not a living thing seemed to break the awful stillness of the dark forest; and tired with heat and anxiety, we returned to the now smouldering embers of the past night's fire. As the day wore on, our thirst became intense; and the poor horses would hobble near with their great distended eyes looking imploringly at us. Their hunger they could check with the coarse grass about; but water there was none.

Further on and to the left, nearer a gap between the mountains, Waller thought water might be found; and now parched with thirst, and nervous from want of rest, did we again set forth, leading our chargers—mine no longer fit to ride; the last fall having cut his knees to the bone. The heat was terrific, as we pushed through the tangled forest; and more than once did each of us give vent

to our feelings of despair. Presently the ground was more open, and large rocks, their edges worn smooth, indicated that at any rate in the rainy season water flowed this way.

"Hark! what's that?" said Morris, stopping short and putting his ear to the ground; then rising, and his face beaming with joy, he added, "Water, or I'm a Dutchman! There is a river near, for I hear it rushing."

We all stopped to listen, and in the distant roaring knew that Morris was correct. Another half-hour, stumbling over rocks, embedded in white sand, and we stood on the jungle-covered banks of a deep and rushing river.

Horses and men rushed into the flood, and in one prolonged drink, quenched their burning thirst. How delicious it appeared, and how cool! Stripping ourselves of our tattered linen we washed it well, and putting all of it on the hot stones to dry, took our first wash since the outbreak. This done, we resolved to look for food, and in the frogs, chamelions, and little fish found under the stones, soon had quite enough for a feast.

Our clothes being dry, we retreated somewhat more into the jungle, and getting dry wood, had ere long our spoils broiling upon the embers. Notwithstanding Waller's complaint of indigestion, arising from the lizards, he ate plentifully; and all of us felt happier in having at last reached the

hills. There they were, now about two miles away, towering up to a great height, and covered with the densest jungle. Yet over them we must go; and, if possible, seek shelter in Nepaul.

As we were tired, and wanted rest, Waller proposed that we should go up the river towards some overhanging rocks, and see if shelter from tigers and other wild beasts could not be made, or found; for, as he remarked, "to sleep in this jungle was certain death, and almost begging a tiger to eat you up." Undoing the hobbles of our horses, we again started over the dreadful stones, and in about an hour's time, reached the rocks pointed out by Waller. In them we found the necessary shelter, both from sun and observation; and so, releasing our wretched animals once more, tried, by all means in our power, to make our den secure from invasion.

The place selected by us was raised a few feet above the water in the river, though evidently subject to inundation in a flood. Three enormous boulder-rocks had, perhaps, when first this river forced its way through these mountains, been carried down from the heights above, and then cast with a Titan's force on the sandy bank. Between them was an opening sufficiently large to allow the three of us room to lie down; the river-sand, washed into it by successive floods, making a dry and soft carpet. Both ends of our abode were open; the one towards the bank being large, and

offering ready access to the prowling tiger. This we determined to enclose; so collecting a number of small stones, broken boughs, &c., &c., before two hours had expired we had not only made this safe, leaving a small opening at the top to admit light and air, but had barricaded the part towards the river with two great rocks and a fallen tree, the better to prevent our being observed by any traveller in the jungles opposite. The work done, tired and footsore, we fell asleep.

I had been asleep for hours, and would have continued so had I not been awoke by Morris, who, shaking me hard, called my attention to some smoke that he had seen rising above the jungle, some distance up the river on the opposite side.

"Have you told Waller?" I asked, feeling an indefinite dread at the idea of any human being discovering our whereabouts.

"No," said Morris, "Waller is feverish, so I want him to sleep. I thought that if you and I went sneaking up this river a little way, we might find out the cause. If there should be a village there, this is no place for us to remain in; and I am anxious for us all to have a good rest before we enter the hills. Do you know, I have an idea that this river is the Sada. I fished in it years ago, when we were at Bareilly, and if so, the opposite side is Rohilcund.

"All right," I said, following Morris through

the narrow opening of our marine villa. "But if it should be a village, those horses will be tell-tales, so I vote we shoot them."

"No, don't take life if possible," replied Morris. "Poor brutes, they have shared our wanderings, and I have not the heart to order their destruction. But there,"—and he pointed across the river—"don t you see that blue smoke?"

The smoke was distinctly visible, and, on going a few yards further, we saw a few huts. This was sufficient, so turning round, we returned to the rocks beneath which Waller was still sleeping. He was aroused by our entering, and inquiring the cause, was immediately for our returning there and learning more.

"No," said Morris, after having listened in silence to our various proposals; "I do not like any of your plans, nor am I for running away from this in such a hurry. I think the best plan is to draw lots and see who shall swim the river, and beneath the tall grass, opposite the little village, lie concealed. You might overhear their conversation, and find out what is going on in this horrible country. If you like, I will swim over presently."

"Let us draw lots," I said, "and as soon as the moon rises, one of us can swim over. I saw a capital place to hide under some large stones and bushes; but after all, I dare say the niggers will all be in their huts, and then we shall never hear a

word; and whoever goes, has his bath for nothing."

"That won't matter this hot weather," said Waller, collecting some pieces of broken wood, to be used for drawing lots. "I, for one, am willing to go without drawing lots at all."

This was overruled, and the necessary sticks being found, each of us drew, and the lot fell on myself. I was willing enough to go, and so was not sorry for the way affairs went.

"I say, Waller," said Morris, "Villars has only one arm, so is not so well able to swim as we are; what do you say to one of us taking his place?"

"Likely!" I said, angry enough at their fancying I was not capable of taking my share of risk. "Very likely that I am going to have my work done for me. I rather like the idea of going. I can swim as well as either of you, and, barring meeting a great hungry tiger prowling about, don't see any risk in it. I mean to go."

This settled it; and as darkness came on, and the moon rose, I wandered, accompanied by Waller and Morris some distance up the stream, and above the village, towards which I meant to drop silently down with the current. Shaking hands with my comrades, and giving them my torn remnants of clothes to take back with them to our abode in the rock, I entered the stream, and five minutes afterwards was groping my way under the long grass

and slippery stones which concealed me from the men before me.

There were four of them sitting round a fire, by the flame of which they had evidently only just finished cooking their meal. The moon shone brightly upon them, enabling me to distinctly see their features, which, together with their language, left me no doubt but that they were Mussulmans, and a party recently come from Bareilly. I had been some time observing their movements from the pitch-dark spot chosen by me for concealment, when the movement of one of them, with his hands full of brass pots, towards the river, made me slip quietly into the water, and there kneeling on a stone at the bottom with my head barely above the surface, I waited in patience until the cut-throat-looking villain, not four yards from me, should have washed his brass-pots and returned to his companions.

After picking his teeth, spitting, and going through other performances common to the race, he recommenced rubbing the pots, and addressed his companions on the bank above somewhat thus.

"Aye bhaie." "Oh brother. This is a new state of things. All the dogs of infidels are killed. Very good. Mahomed is great."

"Is it true," asked one of the men from the bank, "that Khan Bahadoor Khan, the Bareilly Nuwab, has given orders for all the infidels to be killed at Nynee Tal?"

"Yes," said the man, scrubbing away at his pots,

as if killing infidels was an every-day amusement. "News came from the Shah of Delhi ordering every infidel to be killed in Hindostan; and Khan Bahadoor Khan has taken a large army and a great many guns to punish the rebellious infidels at Nynee Tal."

"Bismillah, kya khoob!" grunted out the other. And the pots being sufficiently polished, my sable friend returned to enjoy his hookah with his companions.

For more than half an hour did they remain in silence smoking, and then a movement told me they had entered the hut for the night. Raising myself from the water, and looking through the long prickly grass, I saw they had gone, and slipping quietly into the stream I struck out for the middle; knowing that in that part of it alone was there any safety from tigers and bears, whose habits led them at dark to come down to the river-sides to drink.

By the bright white moonlight, I had no small difficulty in ascertaining which of the great stones on the shore formed our abode, and had more than once turned in towards the bank hoping thereby to see easier. That we were some distance down the stream I knew; but I had now been so long in the water that I feared I had passed it, and determined to run the risk of meeting a tiger, and walk along the shore, giving at times a low whistle. This I did, and at last to my great joy heard it replied to a few yards in advance; where I found Morris

and Waller, who, feeling anxious about my not returning, had wandered down the river in search. A few minutes more and we were safe in our little dwelling; and putting on my scanty clothing, I told them the result of my inspection.

"Then it is as I expected," said Morris. "Rohilcund is up, and every fellow murdered. God help them! Now what are we to do? These fellows will invest Nynee Tal, and starve the people out; for I do not see how they can get supplies, or even force enough to prevent this Bareilly Nuwab from taking the place. I fancy the Bareilly Nuwab is the Rampore man who had, when I knew him, a very fair army."

"Look here, Morris," I replied, a new light breaking in upon me. "You know the 66th Goorkhas are at Almorah: well, had they mutinied they were strong enough, with the artillery, to murder every soul in Kemaon; so, either they have walked off without touching their officers, or they are aiding in the defence of Nynee Tal."

"I fancy," said Morris, "that if this attack succeeds, the people will retreat from Nynee Tal to Almorah, and there they can hold out for a long time in the fort."

"There is no water there," I said. "Old Bricks dug until he could get men to dig no longer, and never came to a drop."

"Well, I don't know what to think of it. I

should like to get to Almorah; but if the Goorkhas have mutinied, that is certain death; and Nepaul is no better."

"So much for your hills then. I think our best plan is to rest ourselves here for a day or two. I will swim over to-morrow night, and see if we can hear anything more; and if not, leave this for the higher ranges, where it will be healthier in the rainy season, which is not far off now. I believe there is nothing to be done, but wander up towards the north. We have Europeans at Landour, and if we could only get there—" said Waller.

"Ay, if—" I said. "Why, it is three hundred miles away, across dozens of torrents; and how could we avoid observation?"

"As to avoiding observation," said Morris, "that would be the same in Nepaul. I really do not think it would be a bad plan to find out where we are, and then, when once in the hills, follow up the snowy range. I really think if I could see some of the peaks I should know our position. Any way we cannot remain in this Teraie during the rains, and will be, probably, more secure, and certainly healthier, higher up."

"Good night, old fellows," said Waller. "I am too tired to discuss the subject further; and Villars, you must be done up too,—come to sleep."

With a mutual good night, and an humble prayer that the Giver of all goodness would extend his *mercy* towards us, we soon after fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NEXT morning saw us up early; and, after a search for the horses, we enjoyed a wash in the rushing river before us. Then a hunt for small fish, frogs, and chameleons, and we cooked our breakfast in peace, and, comparatively speaking, in happiness. The day was cloudy, and, by the distant thunder, we knew the rainy season was fast advancing; and that to stop here was madness. Even were we safe from observation—which we were not, with the little village so near—there would be danger in staying: but our house, or rock, was untenable with the slightest rise of the stream; and to remain in the dense jungle during the rains was certain death. Under these circumstances, we resolved only to stop one day more, and then push away for—what we could not very well say—the snow, perhaps. The heat and flies prevented our resting much during the long, close day, and the smoke at intervals, from above the jungle ahead, told us that enemies were not far distant. At

about nine o'clock Waller, accompanied by Morris and myself, did as I had done the previous evening; and we—that is Morris and self—returned to our rock, with the once stout lieutenant's torn habiliments.

We had not been seated long, and had commenced talking over the very distant hopes there were of our ever escaping, when the signal agreed upon between Waller and ourselves was heard, and immediately the wet, naked man stood before us.

"You've been precious sharp," said Morris, handing him his rags.

"And so would you have been, if you had been frightened out of your existence, as I have," replied Waller, panting for want of breath.

"Why, what's the row?" I asked.

"Nothing very much," answered Waller, putting on his clothes, and entering the residence on all-fours. "I swam over, and got into the hole under the hut, and there waited for ever so long to hear some nigger speak; but I don't think there were any to speak, for it was too dark to see, and the thunder made such a row I could not hear. Well, I waited on, and hearing nothing, thought I would explore the river higher up, and find out if there were any more huts. I waited for the flashes of lightning to throw some light on the jungle, but could see nothing, so resolved to creep back to my old hole; when, just as I came near, I heard a

heavy rush in the bush over my head, and a noise accompanying it very like a tiger's growl. This was enough for me: the next instant I was, with a plunge, in the middle of the river; and, with the help of the lightning, have managed to hit off our abode."

"Do you think it was a tiger?" asked Morris.

"Of course I do, or I wouldn't have bolted. I'll go in at any nigger you like, and would very much like to have a chance of paying some of these fellows what I owe them; but hang tigers, those are not fair game."

"Why, man, I am not doubting your pluck," said Morris; "I only asked you whether you really thought the brute was a tiger; because if it was a man, he might have seen you plunge into the water, and thus tell our whereabouts."

"No," said Waller, shaking his head obstinately. "It was no man. No man goes purring and growling as that beast did. Moreover, if it was, I'll defy him in a pitch-dark night like this seeing two yards before him."

This seemed to satisfy Morris, and blowing upon the embers outside our habitation, we regaled ourselves on the surplus fish and frogs left from the morning's find. This done, with not a few forebodings that the river might rise in the night, we crept between our rocks, and soon were sleeping soundly. The river did rise during the night, but

not sufficiently so to quite reach our habitation. However, as the dark clouds over the hills portended more rain; and if so, knowing that we must quit the river bank, we resolved after the usual breakfast to recommence our wanderings, and try to reach somewhere less unhealthy before the weather became worse.

There was some consultation over shooting our horses; but we feared the report of the pistol being heard in the little village across the water. After a while it was determined to leave them to manage for themselves; and with a long hug at the good steeds that had carried us so well, we set out under the blazing mid-day sun, first burying our saddles and bridles.

How terrific was the heat as we toiled up those dreadful hills, torn and tired! We reached the summit only to find another rocky jungle-covered mass facing us. Then down came the rain, and for two hours did we wait until the fury of the storm should be passed. How awfully did the thunder echo through those lonely hills! and the white lightning served but to make more distinct the maze of hills into which we had entered. Frequently had we seen the marks of tigers and bears; and as we pushed our way up the steep watercourse, we in dread expected to find it disputed by such deadly enemies.

The reddening clouds over towards the west told

us the day was fast closing; and yet we were further than when we started from finding a resting-place for the night. To our front rose a huge precipice, to clamber up or down which was impossible; so turning off, we with difficulty descended into the bed of a shallow stream running at its foot. It was now dark; and unable to find anything to eat, or to get the damp wood to light, we sat on the stones in moody silence, and there, regardless of roaring tigers or savage Mussulmans, half-nodded until day-break. It was a dreadful night, cold and rainy; and fearfully did our limbs ache on the morrow.

We found a few frogs on the margin of some shallow ponds left by the last night's rain, and on these breakfasted before proceeding on our journey Then following the course of the stream for its whole distance, we delayed some time in catching a sufficiency of frogs and small fish to last us for the evening's meal, as we resolved that that should be taken on the summit of the fir-clad mountain before us.

There was no road or even tract up the almost perpendicular sides of that mountain. Clinging by the trees and grass growing on its side enabled us to reach the top, not, however, until after hours of toil. Here among the fir-trees we sat down, and watched the heavy clouds rolling in masses from hill to hill. Behind us, miles away, beyond the chaotic heap of low mountains, over and through which we had wandered, lay the plains basking in

the hottest sunshine, and looking so peaceable. Alas! could one have imagined that those peaceful-looking plains were torn with rebellion and murder? Far away, among the dark neutral-tinted clouds, stood out here and there a peak of snow, but too indistinct to allow either Morris or myself to tell its name or whereabouts. Collecting fir-tree cones and fallen branches, we soon managed to have a good fire; and, broiling our frogs and fish, tried at dark to sleep. The cold was rather severe, for we were now not only at a good elevation, but the rains having set in, made the mountain air raw and damp. Added to this, our light dresses, simply a flannel shirt and trousers, and these in tatters, did not contribute much to our comfort.

With morning we started out, each in different directions, to find water and food; but could discover none. Morris was very unwell, and after midday became so seriously ill as to cause us no little alarm. Towards the afternoon we again resumed our search for food, sucking the damp boughs and leaves so as to quench our thirst. All was unavailing, and as the dark thundering night closed upon us, we almost wished it might be our last.

How dreadful was that night. The rain poured in sheets, its weight breaking off the dead branches of the fir trees, which fell around. Now pealed the awful thunder, louder than the roar of thousands of artillery. With the blinding flash we could distinctly see the smallest leaf and the distant plains.

To this succeeded a darkness to be felt, disturbed by another intense blaze of electric fire. There was no sleep for us, poor wearied, footsore, hungry men: huddled together and cowed by the warring of the elements, we looked on in silence, and in anxiety watched the first streak of day.

We did hope that the fall of rain of the previous night would have given us a clear view of the snow, and thus have enabled us to discover where we were. But after waiting until after sunrise, and seeing the clouds again gathering thickly, we resolved to be once again on the move. Morris was easier, and by sheer pluck did the distance with us. Poor fellow! he was ill at the end of it; but certainly not worse than when we first started.

As usual, we made towards the snow, and wandering through these everlasting hills, made a fair day's journey. There were yet some hours before sunset, and finding Morris far from well, we resolved to stop in the valley a few feet below us, and endeavour to construct some sort of shelter from the rocks and stones scattered over the few square yards of flat ground, and through which, swollen with the rains, now rushed a small river.

On reaching the little valley we found several protruding rocks under which a sort of shelter could be found; but it was so damp and wet that to remain in any of them was impossible. However, as time pressed, and we were famishing, we persuaded Morris to seek the shelter of an overhanging

rock from the coming storm, whilst we went in search of some cave, dry wood, and edibles. The stream abounded with frogs and small fish, so we had soon enough for a supper, and without much difficulty we found a sufficiency of dry wood to enable us to cook our dinner and dry our soaking linen.

Waller did not return until nearly dusk, loaded with dry boughs and some green stuff, which he declared to be watercress. He told us that some miles up, where the valley was narrow and the stream a little deeper, were some great limestone rocks all covered with creepers and ferns. In these he saw several large holes only a few feet above the water, and in which he thought shelter from these dreadful rains might be found. It was too late that night to go, and Morris was too ill to be moved: but next morning we resolved to thoroughly explore the wild spot we were in.

We found Waller's watercress to be but queer stuff, and congratulated ourselves on its not being poison; for neither he nor I felt any the better for it as we went cave-hunting next morning. Morris was much the same, having evidently caught a fever; and as our present mode of life could but increase his disease, we resolved that in the event of these caves turning out habitable, to stop in them until the rainy season was over, and then resume our journey towards the snow.

The caves were some distance up the stream, and *with difficulty* seen, their mouths being hidden by the

huge creepers clinging to their sides. Selecting one about twelve feet high from the ground, and whose entrance was hidden by the boughs of a large tree springing from the earth below, we resolved to enter it, and for that purpose, taking his revolver in his hand, Waller climbed the tree, and whilst I clambered up the wet bark as I best could, my companion had time to ascertain the size and qualities of this hole in the rock.

To us both it appeared very like the sort of place that would be chosen by a bear for his residence, more particularly with the tree growing in front, by the branches of which he could ascend without difficulty.

However, before entering, we looked well for marks, and seeing none anywhere about, there was

not much chance of possession being disputed. Thus it turned out: and Waller, with myself, soon explored the cave and its neighbours.

The first one we entered appeared the best for our purposes, the tree not only concealing its mouth from view, but being a ready means by which we could mount up at all times. It was a good size, some twenty feet long by about eight broad, and varying in height from its entrance at six feet to four at the end. The large flat rock, projecting some distance in front, would serve us for a fire-place, and as the whole thing appeared water-tight, we considered ourselves most fortunate in our find. Returning to Morris, we found him very unwell; and as there was no time to be lost in getting shelter, we helped him along as we best could to the cave. Such dry leaves and grass as we could hastily collect we did, and had, before long, made not an uncomfortable bed for our poor friend, who was got up the tree with no little difficulty. After arranging everything as far as we could for the sick man's comfort, we proceeded to collect dry wood, which we stored up in a smaller cave no great distance off.

As it was now our intention to remain here for some time, we resolved, as far as lay within our power, to have some degree of comfort, and to try by all means to keep our health, so as the better to enable us to undergo the fatigues yet in store. *We already* began to find out that some vegetable

was necessary, as also a change of diet; but how to discover any green food fit to eat, or even to cook it when found, was the subject of a long talk after our evening's meal at the cave's mouth.

Morris became much worse towards midnight, and by daybreak was delirious. In that dark cave, it was a dreadful thing to hear the poor fellow raving. At one time he would talk as if he were with his mother, or promising to return to her. Then suddenly he would start up, and by his language, show that the scenes of the mutiny were flitting before his memory. To us, anxiously watching him, the idea was horrible. Here, before us lay, probably on the couch of death, our companion in misery, and we unable, in the slightest, to alleviate his pain. All we could do was to cool his feverish brow, but this could not save him. Eat he would not, and unless he did, death must be the result. Time after time I tried to tempt him with some pieces of broiled fish, but it was rejected with loathing; and as I found my efforts unavailing, I felt sure that, ere long, his earthly career would close.

That his fate would, not improbably, be ours, I could not but surmise; still it was no time to give way, and calling Waller from the outside, where he was endeavouring to make a few drops of water boil in a hollow stone, we consulted on making earthenware.

"Can't we," I asked, "knead the clay into the shape of a bowl; the inside of my hat would do for a mould, and when it is a little dry, bake it in ashes?"

"I dare say. We cannot hurt in trying; though I expect it will always split with water in it, and heat. You leave Morris, and go and make the thing in your hat. If I can only get this drop of water to boil, I will tear a few bits of flesh off this frog's legs, and make soup of it; but the stone is so thick it will never heat through."

Heaping the leaves over Morris so as to increase his warmth, and arranging some grass for his pillow, I quitted the cave, and ere long, from some blue clay on the banks of the stream, succeeded in moulding a very fair bowl, large enough to contain a couple of quarts of liquid.

There being no sun to dry it, I placed it near the fire, and filling up the cracks as the drying of the clay occurred, had before night a hollow bowl of hard earth, which, on being thoroughly dry, was placed in the ashes and left to bake all night.

On returning to the cave, I was glad to see that Waller had managed to get the water to boil, and was now busy in tearing into it the frog's flesh.

His bright eye showed how pleased he was; and I, myself, felt that now, at any rate, we could manage to make Morris some soup.

"I have been thinking," said Waller, "that if we could get any vegetable into the soup, it would

make it better. Down where I come from, in England, I have seen the poor eat nettles, and they say young ones are just as good as spinach. Now, there are lots of these nettles about here, as our torn legs can tell, and why not mix them with the soup?"

"A very good thought; but in those few drops of water is there room for vegetables?" I replied.

"No; this stone is only a makeshift. Your grand caldron is to be the thing."

"But supposing it is a failure, what then?" I asked; feeling that a thing so easily made would not answer.

"But we will suppose it isn't," said Waller; "and now how are we to give this soup to Morris, for I never thought of that?"

After several plans, amongst which leaves, hollow wood, and even the barrel of a pistol were suggested, it was resolved that the case of his watch, which we knew he had in his pocket, should be used for the purpose; and as its use would in no way injure the watch, the suggestion was immediately acted upon; and some really tolerable soup poured down the throat of the insensible man.

Towards night we made more, and gave it to him in the same manner; and, then tired with so much constant fatigue and anxiety, we both fell asleep, leaving poor Morris and his fever to manage themselves.

CHAPTER XXIX.

NEXT morning Morris was certainly a degree better; and after getting some more frog soup, and additional leaves thrown over him, which we brought from our store in another cave, he fell off to sleep, leaving us to superintend the baking of the caldron, as Waller called it, and to collect eatables, dry wood, and grass. The clouds, which had for two days been coming lower and lower, now burst over us, and unceasingly did it rain for days. To our great joy Morris began decidedly to improve, and before my caldron had been in use two days, was able to join Waller in a joke at its classical shape. All fever had left him, but he was so weak as to be unable to move; and we felt grateful, as did he himself, to that Providence who had hitherto ruled so much in our favour, that ere the extremity of his disease occurred, we should have strayed into this little valley. Day after day the pouring rain continued, and seldom, except to catch frogs, fish, and gather nettles, did we leave the cave. It was

wearisome work, sitting on the large flat stone in front, watching the ever-pouring clouds. Often now that Morris was well again we would talk over the past, and wonder where and how all this would end. In this small valley we appeared to be the only living tenants, and more than once I thought perhaps the only Englishmen alive in India.

Sometimes, when a break in the weather enabled us to get out, we added to our wood store, and this drying served the purposes required. Thus passed weeks; dates and months were forgotten; and a few days' fine weather, with a sharp frosty feeling in the morning, made us imagine that the rainy season was over, and once again came the anxious wish to see our fellow-men.

"What think you of moving?" said Morris to Waller, after they had both returned from climbing up the steep sides of the opposite mountain, and had a view of the snowy range as it bounded the horizon from right to left.

"I am willing," he replied. "You say you know those peaks far away to the left, and I would rather not die here without an effort to save myself."

"Do you think the rains are over?" I asked Morris.

"I can't tell—I think so," he replied. "We have been here now for, I should think, two months, and that would make it near August; and as we ge

higher the rains will abate. I am for starting. I am sure that the large mass of snow to our left was Badrinath; and if so, Landour is not far from opposite to it. I wish we had done Robinson Crusoe, and kept a notched stick; we could then have told how long we had been here."

"If it comes on to rain again," said Waller, "I dare say we can manage to find some shelter. Nothing venture nothing win, and I am for ending this suspense one way or another."

This settled it, and next morning arranging our dried wood in a little heap inside, and burying my caldron under the dry leaves in the cave, we, with mixed feelings of regret, hope, and dread, quitted the rock, and by sundown, after hours of grievous toil, cooked our evening meal beneath the far-spreading branches of an old oak forest.

Thus we proceeded for days: more than once we had disturbed a grisly bear, and had even found a footpath, with the marks upon it of human feet. But either constant exposure to danger had made us callous, or the anxiety to know our fate made us reckless of meeting our fellow-man. The constant cold and days of starvation often made us desperate, and more than once we sighed for our valley and its caves.

Once again the rain began; and we could find no shelter from the dowfal under the dripping trees or leech-haunted bank. Long since our

shoes had been worn through, and with scarce sufficient covering to conceal our nakedness, we dragged our torn and blistered bodies through the prickly jungle. Sometimes assailed with ague one of us would lie down to die; but a stronger hand was over us, and we yet hoped to live.

"I can't stand this much longer," I said to Morris, as, barefoot, faint, and shaking with ague, I sat on a moss-covered stone.

"Bear up yet," said he, whilst his teeth chattered with ague too. "I vote we take the first path we see, and follow it up come what may. I, for one, am so near dead, that it cannot much add to my pain being killed."

"Then," said Waller, as he tore the blood-sucking leeches off his legs, "let us return to the path not half-a-mile away. I prefer death to this. Existence is fast becoming too horrible to cling to."

Morris had never before consented to our following up paths, but was always for getting under the snow, and then turning down upon Gurhwal and Kemaon. But now weeks of hunger, cold, and fever, had made him think less seriously of the danger; and he almost mechanically followed Waller and myself down to the small path we had crossed about half-an-hour before. Through the dense rank jungle we traced this little road, when, suddenly coming round a corner of the rock, I almost ran against the body of a man.

For a moment he took his eyes from off the ground, and surveyed the cause of his being stopped; then resuming his downcast look, he pursued his course beyond us.

"What shall we do?" I hastily asked Morris behind me. "The man is a Fakeer, and I think observed us!"

"I will stop him, and trust to him. God help us!" responded Morris; and hastening back, he was immediately in front of the wandering mendicant.

To our surprise he made a salaam to the wild, haggard man before him, and addressing him as "his child," asked him what he wanted.

"Help!" said Morris, trembling with hope. "We are hiding from the Sepoys, who have killed all the other Sahibs: we are dying."

"Follow me to my station on the top of yonder hill, and there you will be safe," was the welcome answer.

"Brahmin," I said, "your religion and vows forbid your being cruel. Are you going to lead us to be killed?"

"No, child!" said he, looking with pity upon our wretched appearance. "I am not cruel; trust to me, and do not let another man see you. I will save you. Let us be going." And moving on, we followed him up the winding path.

"Silence," said he, putting his fingers on his lips.

And tortured with hopes and fears we in silence followed our priestly guide.

On the mountain top was a small hut, a few gourds, an earthen pot to contain water, and firewood. This was the Fakeer's home; and as he entered, begging us to do so too, he for the first time broke silence since we started together.

"Where are we?"

"In Nepaul," replied the man.

"Is Mussouri far away?"

"I do not know it. I never move from this, except to beg in the villages in the valley below."

"Are the people in them friendly to the English Government?" asked Morris.

"I think not: so you remain concealed. They cannot come here. I will go and beg to-morrow, and find out. I give you a Brahmin's oath not to betray you. Now sleep, my children, and I will make you all chupatties."

I was too ill and worn to doubt him, and stretching myself on the floor of his hut, for some minutes watched him light his fire, and extract a large heap of coarse flour from a bundle before him; then, muttering a prayer for success, I resigned myself to the deepest sleep.

It was dark when the old priest awoke us; and most gladly did we devour the welcome unleavened bread before us. Good old man! he seemed pleased at seeing us eat, and only replied to any of our

questions by the word "Eat." At length we were satisfied, and huddling round the blazing fire, asked him for information regarding all that had occurred.

His secluded life prevented him from mixing with the people of the villages round about; and not being a curious man, he paid but little attention to reports abroad. That he had heard of the rising and outbreak against the Ṣirkar, he did not deny; nor did he make any scruple of telling us that he was sorry for it, as it was got up by Mussulmans, of whom, he added, "there are plenty in the village below, and that is my reason for warning you against exposing yourselves to their sight." Afterwards, as the night wore on, he became more communicative; and besides repeatedly warning us against being seen by villagers, told us the history of his taking up his abode in so wild a part. It was simply this. He had long lived at Kashee, and daily performed his ablutions in the holy Ganges. Then, as his years increased, he visited both Kedarnath and Badrinath; and, seeing how short was man's life, and how useless were the advantages to be gained by striving for wealth, he selected this spot, and, building his hut, had remained for many years contented and happy.

"May heaven bless you for your kindness to us!" said Morris, when the old Brahmin had done speaking.

"It was heaven's will that you should come

across my path, and I like your Government. They do not interfere with our religion as the Mussulmans did," replied our host.

"Yet the Sepoys thought so," I said, "and have rebelled on that account."

"The Sepoys received too much 'purwust' ('caretaking'), and were proud; besides, Mussulmans made them think so. But I see the other smaller Sahib is asleep. You go to sleep also, and sleep on in peace, and may the Maker of all things take charge of you," replied the old man, pointing to the inside of his hut, in which we were to sleep.

"Good Sahibs, you pray?" he said, as he saw Morris kneel for a short prayer with me at his side.

"We do," said Morris, rising, "and trust in God."

"May He ever preserve you!" said the holy man, wrapping his blanket round him; and, with a sense of happiness, security, and hope, which before I had never felt, I soon sank into the heaviest slumber.

Next morning we rose very early, and saw the old priest, after putting some ashes on his head, quit for the villages below, there to do what I verily believe he had never before done, viz., encourage gossip. Before going, having given us his blessing, he requested we would not expose ourselves, but, if we heard any one coming, to hide behind a sort of screen composed of grass, which served as a division in the hut. All this we promised to do, and then saw our old friend, staff in hand, start away.

There was plenty of water about, so we were enabled to get a tolerably decent wash, though as to being perfectly clean the thing was impossible. Our bodies, from having been so much exposed to the sun, were blistered, and our feet, legs, and hands torn to pieces with thorns; added to this, all over us were leech-bites, which inflaming, caused us at times very serious pain and annoyance.

The view around our hut was magnificent: stretching from east to west was the wondrous snow, towering up into the watery sky above; below us was a rather large valley, having a stream of fair size running throughout its whole length: sprinkled here and there, and nearly concealed by plantain trees, were numbers of well-built cottages; and further up the vale the houses were more numerous, and the white-washed gaudy temple said the cruel Mussulman lived there. From the hut itself little if anything but the snowy range could be seen, as, in selecting his site, the old Fakeer had evidently tried to have his home as far removed from human observation as possible, and for this purpose had built it behind some vast rocks, smoothed by the water's action, and left exposed on the summit of that hill millions of years ago. Here truly did we seem safe from observation, and happy did we feel in even temporary security.

As the day wore on, and our host did not return, we began to feel somewhat nervous, to say nothing

of hungry. At another time we would probably have felt more anxious at any delay, and less inclined to trust our lives in the hands of a man simply because he told us to do so; but constant fatigue and harassment of mind and body had made us bold, and almost willing to end the suspense, either one way or another. There was yet one thing that disarmed our suspicion—the man was evidently tender-hearted, and disliked Mahomedans, from whom he had most to fear; and so putting all these things together, and considering the straggling state of the villages about, we at length concluded that the delay in his return was unavoidable.

I had hitherto preserved my watch, a gold one, and a present from my father a few days after my arrival in England. Damp and numerous falls had not improved its going powers, still it went, and served, with guessing, to let us know how the day sped on. Morris had one also, but having forgotten to dry the case after using it as a soup-ladle, the damp had entered the works and settled their movements for ever. It was 3 P.M. by my watch before the old man returned, and glad were we when he did so to see him bringing with him blankets and other things necessary for our comfort.

After giving him our thanks for his kindness, and informing him over and over again that we had not exposed ourselves, he told us what he had done, and how far he had been.

CHAPTER XXX.

"I WENT begging," said the old man, "from house to house for some attah and blankets, and if one gave me a blanket, I took it and hid it in the banks of the river, and then went on to get another, as I wanted a blanket for each of you; and if I was seen with more than one, I thought that some of the vile Mussulmans might be suspicious. I got four blankets, rather old, but they will keep you warm;" and he handed over to us four torn things, not by any means clean, but which we very gladly accepted. Then after being thanked, he resumed. "I have some attah here, as we shall want it for the chupatties. It is not very good, but I know them; they don't like to refuse me, so they give that which they won't eat themselves. Thus I went on from house to house, and picked up little bits of news as I travelled. The Mussulmans bragged, and once or twice spat at me as I passed, saying, 'Your time is coming to an end.' I have a friend in one of the villages, and from him I learnt that there are

several Sahibs at Nynee Tal with Goorkhas; they are fighting there very hard, as the King of Delhi has ordered his troops to kill them."

"But they have not been able to kill the Sahibs and Goorkhas?" I asked.

"Not yet," replied the Fakeer. "As the English gentleman have got some guns, and shoot them as they come up the hill; but the Mussulmans in the village boast that they will soon take the place and kill every one in it."

This was all he knew; and having told it he went away to make the necessary amount of chupatties, whilst we talked together over the news we had heard. By it we saw that the Goorkhas were staunch, and that the words I had heard spoken by the fellows across the river at the foot of the hills were true, viz., that a force of rebels had been sent against us at Nynee Tal. As this was now two months ago, and Nynee Tal was still ours, we came to the conclusion that the enemy were bolder in words than deeds, and did not like scaling rocks in the face of men fighting for all they loved dearest. Both Morris and myself had been at Nynee Tal before, and knew it to be by nature strong; but provisions were ever scarce, and now that there were so many mouths to feed we dreaded that starvation might make the little garrison capitulate. If the hill tribes were against us, we saw plainly that even with the Goorkhas it would have been impossible to

keep the enemy off, and that our outposts, such as Almorah, Petorahgurh, and Loohoo Ghat must long since have fallen into their hands. From reviewing it all we took courage, and resolved as soon as the rain abated, and we felt stronger, to start off for Nynee Tal.

We communicated our intention to the old Fakeer, who seemed somewhat hurt at our anxiety to go, and asked if we feared to trust him. But seeing that it arose from a natural desire to be among our fellow-Christians, he endeavoured by reasoning to prove how impossible in our present state of weakness and ill health it would be for us to travel one hundred coss, and that across torrents all swollen with months of rain. "Moreover," he added, "you do not know the road, and would be set upon by some Mussulmans and murdered."

"Padree Sahib," I said, "I will give you this watch—it is all we have—if you will get us a guide, and let us be going."

"No, child; I want not gold, nor will I hear of your going. Wait until you are stronger, and till we ascertain whether your brethren are alive at Nynee Tal."

"I think the old gentleman's is the best plan," said Waller; "and if we are to be killed, it may as well be here as on the road to Nynee Tal. Besides, Villars, neither you nor Morris are at all fit yet awhile to be moving."

"I would give anything to see an English face again," I said; "though I certainly do not feel up to much work."

"Then wait here patiently," said Morris. "You see the old Fakeer is our friend, and, I dare say, will manage for us."

Seeing both were against me, and were supported by the old Fakeer, I kept my longing to myself; and, eating my chupatties, talked until midnight with Morris of scenes far away. Once again did I hope; and, though dark and winding was the path, still it appeared as if it led to freedom, and with that a knowledge of what was occurring among those I loved in England.

For some eight or nine days we led the same monotonous life; and, by dint of much washing, and using some leaves recommended by the Fakeer, had reduced the inflammation of the leech-bites. We were certainly better; and, though I was never free from pains in my limbs, still my anxiety to go to Nynee Tal was so great, that I kept them concealed, and awaited with anxiety the news always expected, yet never coming. The old Fakeer frequently went on begging expeditions, bringing back with him coarse flour, but seldom news that was not more against than for us. He had only the boasting of the Mahomedans about to guide him; and by their accounts it appeared as if the few remaining Englishmen in India were congregated at Nynee

Tal—where, however, they were not yet murdered, but were to be as soon as more troops came from Delhi.

One day, as the old man returned, we saw that he looked troubled and anxious; and, on our asking the cause, were surprised to hear him tell us that we were discovered, and must leave. "I know not how it is, or whether they only suspect," said our friend; "but when I went begging to-day the Mussulmans hooted me, said I was a friend to the Sirkar (Government), and that I collected supplies to send away to the Sahibs. I denied it; but they called me infidel, and said they would come and burn my hut and myself. I do not think that they know you are here; but my begging so often has raised suspicions. Now, if they come, they would find you here, and murder us all; so I have resolved that you start to-morrow. I will give you a guide."

There was nothing for it but to make preparations for starting; and, as night came on, we wrapped ourselves round in our blankets, and slept soundly, until aroused by our host some hours before daybreak. To each of us he gave a small bundle containing about eight pounds' weight of flour, and telling us to trust the guide, to whom before us he administered an oath, we took our blankets on our arms and set forth.

Before leaving I had tried to force upon the old

man my watch, not as a gift of money value, but as something in return for the kindness he had shown: but he would not accept it, simply saying he was satisfied with what he had done. Then giving us a blessing, he pointed to the west, and disappeared behind the huge boulder rock—his home.

From our guide not one word could we extract: he was silence itself; and all we had to do was to follow him through the jungles, which to him were apparently fully known. Our feet, long unused to shoes, had become tolerably hard, but not sufficiently so to enable us to keep up with our nimble guide without wincing. I noticed that he seldom kept to a path for any length of time, and would turn abruptly up the side of some oak-covered mountain, leaving us to recover our breath in the descent on the other side. More than once during this, our first day's march, we had crossed streams deep enough to cause a knowledge of swimming to be necessary; and, raising our flour high above our heads, we would make for the opposite bank. Seeing that we were unable to follow at his fast pace, and that by our limping we were foot-sore, he relaxed his speed, and towards sunset proposed our taking shelter for the night under a projecting rock; beneath which, ere long, we made and ate our evening meal. Often as I had seen the natives make chupatties, little had I learnt of the art, and still less until now did I believe that there was any

difficulty in it. Ours were all alike bad, hollow, and half raw; whilst those made by our guide were solid, good to eat, and tolerably digestible. However, we did not much care for the quality, being far too hungry and too glad to get anything decent to eat to be fastidious; and so, after some laughing at our bad cooking, and listening to Waller praising frog-broth,—for, as he said, *he* could make that—we wrapped our torn blankets about us, and forgetting hopes, fears, and dangers, slept until our ever-active guide awoke us in the morning.

We continued to move in the same silence, and much in the same manner, as on the previous day, our guide stepping out manfully for the first few miles, and then gradually relaxing as he saw us give in. He answered no questions, but only pointed at times to the direction he was going to take. Indeed, had we not heard him speak to the priest, and tell us to stop the previous evening, we should certainly have considered him dumb: as it was, we supposed it was a peculiarity in his disposition, and that perhaps the less he knew of us the better.

Thus we went on for some days: through forest, river, and pouring rain we walked; when one cold raw day, after we had been pursuing our way in silence for miles, our guide stopped suddenly, and turning abruptly towards me, said, at the same time pointing with his finger, "Down there is the Nynee *Tal* road; go on to it."

"Where?" said I, peering through the dense clouds which rolled up the hill in masses.

"There," said he, again pointing and turning to go.

"Go with us, my friend," said Morris, kindly, Then altering his tone of voice as if he feared treachery, he added, "Do you fear to go because the Mussulmans are there?"

"I must not go. There are no Mussulmans there. All Sahibs and Goorkhas. You are in safety," said the man.

Again I offered my watch as a gift, but he pushed it back indignantly, and pointing to the Nynee Tal road, now visible through an opening in the cloud, and saying "Go," he disappeared in the gloom around.

"Well, that is a queer bird," said Waller, "and about the most silent one I ever met; but it is no use waiting up here in the clouds; let us make for the road, and, please God, liberty!"

"Ay, ay," answered Morris; and he and I with difficulty followed the more active Waller down the steep descent.

The road or foot-path was evidently not much used. The long rank grass produced by the rainy season nearly concealed it; and were it not that we saw it was built up here and there, we should have imagined it little else than a cattle-track. It was easy walking; and with hearts buoyant with hope we

pushed along merrily. Now following the track through dense forest and to the summit of a lofty mountain, we hoped to have looked down upon Nynee Tal with its peaceful lake; but before us rose yet another giant hill over which crept the sinuous path. Below at our feet, after countless heaps of hills, their altitude less as they receded, lay the blood-stained plains of Rohilcund, no longer ours, but swarming with our enemies. We stopped some time looking at the scene around, and then, having recovered our strength, resumed our journey onwards. It was hard work to drag our weak, emaciated bodies from the bold, dashing stream at which we drank to the top of that tall mountain. Tired and worn we were, when, as the last rays of the setting sun were seen on the plains of Rohilcund, we sank exhausted on the edge of Cheenas' awful precipice, and with streaming eyes gazed upon the dark waters of the lake below. There behind us were still those hateful plains, swarming with fanatics and murderers, whilst down below those cypress and oak trees lay in peace and security dear little Nynee Tal. From the height we were above it was impossible to distinguish so small a thing as man, even had not the darkness of the evening prevented objects so small being easily observed. Still there was the church, its pretty tower rising above the forest of trees around. Below, the bazaar, indistinct in smoke, and then stretched away the lake. Dark-

ness was closing round us, and still we gazed. The liberty so long sighed for, and now all but attained, was almost more than we dared seize. In each house the lights shone forth; and rising, we determined upon making our case known unto the first gentleman we saw, or calling in at the first house we passed. It was bitterly cold, and our tattered blankets were but a poor protection against that biting autumn wind.

The path now widened into a road, which led close under a large iron-roofed house, and it was determined that one of us should knock at the door, and try to obtain shelter for the night.

I agreed to go, whilst Morris and Waller remained concealed under the large cypress trees near. Arranging my blanket, so as not to quite frighten the opener of the door out of his existence, I knocked, and with a beating heart awaited the answer.

"Kya manta,"—"What do you want?"—said a grand-looking native, coming to the door, and nearly closing it in my face before I could reply.

"Is the gentleman in?" I asked.

"What's that to you—go," was the civil rejoinder of this menial, thinking that I was a Cooly, or some poor native having a grievance, and as such, not fit to be presented to *his* master. Then the door was shut, and I left to return to my companions.

"Some civilian's house, I suppose," said Morris,

"and the fellow that answered the door is one of those curses of India—a chuprassie. Don't let us be done, but tell the master of what sort the man is. I'll go and force an entrance, if that's all."

"Bravo!" said Waller. "Hungry, eh! that makes you let out. I should like to go and give the fellow two between the eyes, and then go on to another house."

"Nonsense," I said; "bright characters we shall appear to the little garrison here, if this is the way we make our entry. Let us all go to the door again, and whoever the owner is, he can't refuse us shelter, and then we will get him to punish the chuprassie."

"Villars on peace and order," laughed Waller.

"Come along," I said, "I hate chuprassies, and everything connected with the civil administration of India, for I think it is infamous; but I am no advocate for taking the law into our own hands. Come along."

And five minutes after we were being stared at by my native friend, whose "what do you want?" was replied to by our sending a salaam to the gentleman.

The word salaam had evidently led the chuprassie to discover that in the men before him, half-naked, and wrapped in torn blankets, he saw no poor coolies, or ruined ryots, but Sahibs; and as such, admissable and to be admitted at all hours.

For some moments the man continued to stare, then remembering himself, he asked, "Shall I call my master?"

"Yes," said Morris; "but say three Sahibs, that have escaped from the plains, want to see him."

"May you live for ever!" said the now salaaming native, and he departed on his errand.

Immediately afterwards, a door was violently opened, and a gentleman stepped quickly forward towards us. For a moment he checked himself, as if suspicious that we were either fooling him, or that it was a party come for no good purpose; but before Morris had finished saying, "I am Major Morris, escaped from Alumpoor," he seized him by the hand, and dragged him into an inner chamber —we following. No word had been spoken. I could see that the heart of the gallant Irishman, our host, was too full for utterance; and, dragging chairs towards the fire, he, for some moments, seemed uncertain how to act.

"Thanks, thanks," we said; "will you give us something to eat?"

"Of course,—anything—everything. Are you ill? Would you like to see the doctor? You must have clothes?" and not until we had told him that all we wanted was food, would he cease offering gifts.

For some minutes we were left to ourselves, whilst our host went to order food, hot water, and

clothes. We had begged him not to allow any native to enter the room during his absence; and thus being free from idle curiosity we could more fully enjoy the newly-found comforts.

"Villars," said Morris, sententiously, after he had been some time watching the great fir log blaze in the grate. "Do you remember what I told you, when we first escaped?"

"No, not particularly; what was it?"

"Why, that in these mountains, I felt sure we should find safety. You see it has turned out so."

"Yes; thank an all-wise and good Providence," I replied.

"I wish I knew who that old Fakeer was," said Waller, "for I would give him anything. He was an odd one, as was the guide he gave; neither of them would be seen, and neither of them take anything."

"We must try to find out, and get them rewarded," I said. "But I wonder how things are going on here. One thing appears certain, they are able to hold their own against the rebels."

"Here you are," said our host, coming in with some beer bottles under his arm, and followed by his servants, whose attention was evidently much more given to staring at our uncouth appearance than in laying the table. "I wish I had something better to offer you, but we are on starvation allowance up here; that is, sometimes things come up the hill, and then we feast; and sometimes the

rebels cut off our supplies, and then we go without. I believe this is the only beer in the place; and so as you must be sharpset, I will send the servants out, and you can eat in peace."

After declining to wash our hands, or indulge in any luxury of that sort, and receiving our host's numerous apologies for having no wine or spirits to offer us (for not a drop was there in the place), we set-to, at our first meal for many a weary day, on roasted meat, and revelled in all the joys of beer. Our kind host would not, by speaking, interrupt our enjoyment: his bright eyes glistened as he saw how the poor famished creatures before him revelled in the new-found comforts.

Everything must come to an end, even a ravenous appetite; and so did ours. Then accepting our host's offer of a good wash with warm water, we followed him to a large bathing-room in another part of the house.

"May I ask your name?" said Morris, after thanking him for all his kindness.

"Stael," answered our host; "Captain Stael of the Artillery. I will tell you everything about what is going on afterwards; just now you will, I am sure, find much comfort in washing, and putting on clean things."

"Have you such a thing as a pair of scissors?" I asked, resolving to bring the hair of my head into something like cleanness.

"Of course," he replied; and, fetching them, desired we would call out for anything we wanted, and return when dressed to the dining-room.

"It is very evident Captain Stael don't think us the cleanest lot he has entertained for some time," said Waller; "and I agree with him that we should be the better for washing in warm, I might say boiling, water. What shall I do with this blanket? I don't like leaving it here for the natives to see?"

"Hang their seeing," I replied, throwing mine into a corner, and preparing to cut away my hair close off at the roots.

"What are you going to do?" asked Morris.

"Try and get my head as well as my body clean, though, I believe, nothing under sulphur will do it," I said, cutting away at the dirty, tangled stuff.

For each of us a large bath had been filled with warm water, with towels, flesh-brushes, and piles of soap. Indeed, the preparations looked as if Captain Stael did certainly think us dirty, which, doubtless, we were.

After an hour's hard rubbing, and cutting our hair à-la-convict, we considered we might venture upon the clean clothes; and soon after, refreshed, cleaner, and less savage-looking, we passed the wondering servants, and returned to the dining-room.

Captain Stael at first insisted, on our being too much in need of rest to be able to listen to his account of how they were situated at Nynee Tal; but on our repeatedly declaring that we should sleep all the better for knowing, he informed us how matters stood.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It appeared by what I gathered then, and also by other means thereafter, when less tired and a better listener, that as soon as the troops at Bareilly broke out into open mutiny, and the news of their having done so was brought by some forty officers, civil and military—who each on one tired horse escaped their fury, and rode within thirty hours the seventy dreadful miles—that preparations were made for the defence of the Lake. The Goorkhas were believed to be trustworthy, and proved themselves so by immediately making prisoners of the native Artillery company at Almorah. These artillerymen were some of them tried by court-martial, and sentenced to die; but the evidence was *only sufficiently* satisfactory to allow the sentence to be commuted into transportation for life—their brethren and would-be fellow-mutineers and murderers being paid up and discharged, for fear the enemy might need artillerymen. Now came outpost and picket duties, and more than once a brush

with the enemy, who could do little else than annoy and cut off supplies from coming up the hill. Frequently a fair force had been sent to capture Nynee Tal, but the great heroes and women-slayers in command quailed before that narrow, rocky, steep ascent, and knew full well that from behind each giant oak and moss-covered crag, the sharp bullet would convey to him a message of death. Our pickets were afterwards withdrawn, for the deadly heat of the rains caused far more injury than the imbecile attacks of the boasting miscreants around. Then came the Mohurrun festival, and with it more boastings; but as the rebel army was swelled into something respectable, and moreover, would probably be joined by a well-disciplined force belonging to a native ally, it was considered advisable to place the women and children in safety at Almorah, and wait the advance of the boasting foe. And waiting they were when we arrived.

"Will they manage to beat us, do you think?" asked Morris.

"Beat us!—no. When it was dry they were afraid to come, because there was no water on the road, and now there is too much for them. They will bother about the entrance to the hills, and keep us out of food perhaps; but cut back directly they get Teraie fever, or have a few fellows shot."

"What did they send the ladies away for then, if it is safe?" I asked.

"Why I don't know; things are managed precious oddly. We have martial law, and yet civil interference, and a bazaar full of as big scoundrels as any unhung, all waiting most anxiously for their brethren below to make progress. Now, don't you see that if the rebels did succeed in forcing the pass, and we were obliged to increase our strength of men in that quarter, we should scarcely have enough left here to keep the bazaar people from rising and murdering all the ladies. Then we might have to retreat on Almorah, and what on earth should we do with a parcel of women and children? So this sending off the ladies is, as a precautionary measure, correct enough."

"Who commands here?" asked Morris.

"Anybody, I believe," said Stael. "Every man that left Moradabad claims command over some three or four Seikh Sepoys that were staunch, and came with them. One time the senior officer of those escaping from Bareilly is supposed to be their commanding officer, and next day he isn't. Then the old ones on leave want to command and croak dismally. Our queer cavalry have several commandants, all more or less touchy, because none of us feel inclined to trust them implicitly; and lastly, there are the oddest lot I ever saw in my life drilling away on the lawn, and varying life by pleasing interruptions of shooting excursions with their masters into the interior."

"What! soldiers learning their drill, going, or rather being taken out as beaters—surely not?"

"Why not? the command of them is given to a timber-merchant, a civilian, that never saw two thousand soldiers in his life. But there you are, all tired," he added, seeing Waller fast asleep. "I will show you the way to your bedrooms." And, lighting candles, we rose to go.

A sofa in one room was given over to Waller, who, I verily believe, fell at once headlong upon it, and never changed from that position until awoke in the morning. Morris and myself had a large room with two beds in it; and, wishing our kind host a sleepy good night, we were ere long revelling in all the luxuries of sheets and blankets. We did not, however, neglect to thank Him whose hand had, after so much of anxiety, exposure, and want, at length brought us to a place of safety; and grateful indeed were we at being allowed once again to see our fellow-men. Much of our misery was already forgotten; and as I dragged my aching limbs upon the high bed, I felt buoyant with hope and satisfaction. My "good night" to Morris received no answer. He was far away in the land of dreams; and as I was far too tired to amuse myself with castle-building, I immediately followed his example.

Oh the pleasures of that first night on the tolerably soft, clean bed, with its white sheets and

Witney blankets! How sound I slept! and how thoroughly rested I felt, as I awoke about seven o'clock hearing Captain Stael at the door, asking us whether we would have some coffee. Coffee, thought I, what luxury! hardly yet able to realize the change that had come over us within twenty-four hours.

"If you please," called out Morris, and Stael went away to order it to be brought; whilst we both, turning out of bed, resumed the cleaning operations of the previous evening. Hoping, even in this case, to be eventually better off.

This done, and the hot, scented coffee brought, we resolved to disturb the still slumbering Waller. He was not undressed, and yet not quite dressed, having been too tired to finish his toilet overnight. There he lay; his head hanging over the side, quite unconscious of our presence, and evidently very much enjoying the present security. "Waller," I said, lifting his head on to the pillow, "will you have some coffee?"

"Coffee," he said, in a sleepy voice; "very likely! Suppose though we must be stumping again."

"No, you Stumps! Wake up; we are all safe. Don't you remember last night when we came here?" and Morris shook the sleepy man.

"Oh yes," said he, sitting up; "but it looks like a dream. After grinding all over the country, living in caves, sponging on Fakeers, and lying on bare

rocks, to find oneself perched upon a comfortable sofa, and hearing a fellow offer you coffee."

"Well, never mind what it looks like," I said; "will you have any?"

"I should just think so," said Stumps; "and ask the nigger to get his master to give us baccy, for I have not smoked since the night before that dreadful mutiny."

This I did; and soon after the servant returned with coffee and cigars. Then sitting on the sofa, and enjoying our first taste of tobacco, we talked over the past and present.

"So you fellows slept well, did you? Luxurious dogs!" said Waller, waxing facetious as he smoked. "So did I, though I can't remember going to bed, or can I even yet quite make myself believe that all our troubles are ended. That if one is to die, it will be in fair fight, or decently in a house; not be murdered, and left for the crows to pick. Coffee too, sweet-smelling Mocha coffee. How grand we are! I say, Morris, have some frog soup; or do you prefer lizard grill?"

"Why you are in great spirits this morning," replied Morris, laughing.

"I should think so. I feel very well in health, and very much like what I should imagine a convict would feel, if under the gallows and going to swing, when the governor comes up to him and says, 'Allow me to offer you a free pardon,' and the

fellow walks off like winking," said Waller, screwing up his blood-shot eyes.

"I wish I felt well," I said, "and I could join in your laugh; but neither Morris nor myself are as strong as you are."

"I know that, and so don't expect you to be jolly. But wait until we have a rap at these brutes at the foot of the hill, and that will put you both in good spirits, I'll answer for it," replied Waller.

"I would do that of course," said Morris; "but now go and wash, and try and get cleaner, for we must go to breakfast."

Nothing could exceed the kindness of Captain Stael. For our comfort the whole shop of the only dealer at the place had been inspected; and a few out of the very few things left for sale, purchased, and now adorning the breakfast-table. He congratulated us over and over again on our escape, and on our already improved looks ("cleaner he means," said Waller in a whisper), and begged that so long as we chose, we would consider his house as our home. To this we assented most willingly; and after breakfast, whilst the great thick rain fell in torrents, we all lit our cheroots, and over the fire talked of all that had gone on.

First, Morris was made to give an account of all that had occurred to us from the commencement of the mutiny; and this having been done, and hundreds of questions answered, some on the taste of

lizards, others on our Fakeer friend, &c., &c., we considered it but fair that Captain Stael should let us know how affairs were progressing in India.

"What are we doing now in the Punjaub and elsewhere?" asked Waller.

"Not much," was the reply; "besieging Delhi, and trembling lest the Punjaub should rise. Almost every regiment has mutinied and murdered their officers; the others are disarmed and waiting an opportunity to be off. Old England has behaved shamefully to us; though I believe it has been all through our Governor-General, who never will believe that the whole country is against us. Fancy troops coming out in the very slowest of sailing vessels round the Cape, and Ministers pooh-poohing the danger; and talking about our retaking Delhi as if it was some little inland town defended by popguns. Luckily the China fleet was stopped—I believe through Lord Elphinstone—and now there is some chance for the poor people at Lucknow who have been besieged for months, as sailors and soldiers are being pushed up to Allahabad. Indeed, some troops are trying now to relieve Lucknow under Havelock, who has had to fight every yard of the way. Massacre and murder has been carried on all over the country. At Cawnpore the troops mutinied, and that fat, sleepy-looking Bithoor blackguard joined them, and induced them to murder every soul in the place. At Bareilly the same. At

Moradabad they allowed almost all to escape. In fact, in all parts nothing but treachery and murder have been and still are going on."

"Do you think, Captain Stael," asked Morris, "that we shall lose India?"

"I trust not," was the answer. "Thank heavens! the communication between Calcutta and the Punjaub is cut off, and we have Sir John Lawrence supreme. He has as yet saved India, and is clearing the Punjaub of disaffected Seikhs by employing them. We get old news, as it has to come over the hills from Mussouri, for the enemy have quite shut us up below; but what we hear is most unsatisfactory. Orders from Calcutta sometimes manage to come round about, viâ Kurrachee and Mooltan, and they are full of Mussulmans being still made civil officers, with magisterial powers; civilians appointed to districts long since torn from our grasp, advice regarding the sticking-on of postage stamps, and how to take a Pandy regiment—as they call a Sepoy corps—prisoner, and forward it, under proper escort, to Allahabad jail. I wish some of those civilians, who give advice so pleasantly from Calcutta, were only undergoing what their poor brethren have had to undergo about these parts. They literally do not know the North-west; and are so absurdly jealous about Sir John using independent power, that orders are always being changed."

"It is the old story, I suppose," I said, "jealousy

between military and civil officials. It ever was so, from Dalhousie and Napier to their present miserable representatives. But what is the force we have here, and how strong are the enemy?"

"We are one hundred English gentlemen, with about one hundred Englishwomen, some six hundred Goorkhas, and two hundred of a queer lot called "levies;" also some twenty of Becher's Irregulars, almost all native officers, and perhaps an equal number of rippish-looking police, men on horseback, that came from Philleebheet. These have to look after the civil authorities' pets in the bazaar, about a thousand bloodthirsty blackguards, all Mussulmans, and to keep Khan Bahadoor's grand army from cutting our throats."

We had determined not to be seen if possible; so, whenever any visitor came, we retired into our rooms; in the first place to disappoint curiosity, and in the second because we were, notwithstanding all our washing, hardly yet presentable. This plan we continued for some days, until, feeling stronger, cleaner, and more respectable, we made friends among the gallant little band hurling defiance at their enemies.

The day after we arrived, I had ascertained that, on the outbreak of the mutiny, letters addressed to some stations had been detained in the Bombay post-office; so hoping this might be the case with letters addressed to Alumpoor, I wrote to the

Bombay postmaster, requesting him to forward any he might have, and waited in hopes of yet once again seeing the hand-writing of those at home.

The mail going out soon after, I wrote my mother a long letter, detailing my escape; and no longer caring for my promise, having already been nearly killed by trying to please Jones, I wrote page after page to Amy.

That she would consider me as murdered I knew, and perhaps might herself have sunk under the effect of the dreadful news; but this was no reason that I should not find out how she was, and would rather that the news of my being yet alive should be told by myself than by a friend. Whether old Jones objected to my writing or not mattered but little to me. I had undergone enough to please him, and to prove the sincerity of my love for his daughter; and as I was now completely broken-down by the exposure, and knew that if I lived I should be forced to return for my health to England, I meant then to demand Amy from him. Should he still refuse consent, I saw nothing for it but to marry without. I was too desperate to be the sport of malice or fancy any longer; indeed, after so much suffering, I should think but badly of Amy if she would not dare her father's anger, and at once be mine.

Thus some days passed—passed by me much under the attendance of the doctor, in whom kind-

ness of manner and knowledge of his profession were proverbial. Sometimes, when my head ached with pain, and my limbs, racking with fever, felt as if they were parting from my body, would his cheerful voice raise my spirits, and make me yet hope to get well, and once again be strong. Poor Morris was but little better. Exposure had shaken his constitution; and often would the pair of us retire to our room from the questioners around, there to shiver and shake unobserved. As for Waller, he never appeared in better health in his life, and was continually sighing for a chance of having a "rap" at our besiegers.

As Captain Stael imagined, the heavy rain did damp the courage of our brave enemy, and they again retreated across the river. With their departure many of the ladies returned from Almorah. To us, unused as we had been for so long to the sight of women, at first it almost appeared wonderful to see the dear fair-haired daughters of England going about in security. Not but what these brave women had had their dangers, and, like their fellow-women elsewhere, had shown the craven race around that an Englishwoman was more than a match for one of them, and that the same gentle hand which could smooth the pillow of the dying soldier was capable of making the revolver tell with most deadly effect. Many a trial had those I saw gone through: parted from their husbands perhaps months before, and still

not knowing whether they were widows. Then whilst they were here, guarded well by men whose interests were the same as their own, perhaps the one they loved dearest might be lying dead at Picket, singled out for a rifle mark by some wild fanatic. For an instant would it flash across their minds that the temptation might be too much, or our cause appear too tottering, and thus cause the Goorkhas to desert. Then there was nothing for it but to die, and with their husbands and children show how well it could be done.

CHAPTER XXXII.

On a dreary wet day, some three weeks after our arrival, the enemy having taken possession of Huldwanee at the entrance of the pass, it was resolved to prevent his doing further damage by driving him out, and that before he could obviate our doing so by throwing up strong earthworks, or by collecting a sufficiently large force to make any serious defence. Reports were pretty plentiful as to the strong position he had taken up, and the wonderful way any force coming to dislodge him were to be treated, and altogether affairs looked very much as if we were at last to have a good hard struggle with our cowardly assailants. The miscreants in the bazaar looked delighted, and their eyes twinkled with ill-concealed joy, as they saw all the younger portion of the white population, some three hundred Goorkhas, and the wonderful levies, paraded, and leave for a flat spot of ground some eight miles away, as a rendezvous for the night. They thought that all were rushing on to certain destruction, and that now at last their time was coming.

The place was not left unguarded. There were there brave women enough to have cowed every craven heart among these villains; but the ladies were scattered from house to house, and thus might have fallen easy victims to their malice. But a patrol of field officers went round continually, and the would-be violators were watched by one whose experience among natives, more especially among their brethren at Rohilcund, made him far more than their equal. No faith in chuprassies had he; he judged for himself; and whilst husbands were gaining what rest they could under a cattle-shed eight miles away, he allowed their wives to feel secure in the ever-frequent visits of the officers' patrol.

It cleared towards sunset, and though feeling still unwell from the effects of the late exposure, I joined the party of officers—some walking, others riding rough thick-set ponies—for the place of rendezvous. Darkness closed in upon us before we had gone far, and it was with some pleasure—after about two hours' scrambling in the dark, with the knowledge of a hideous precipice being all the way to the left hand—that we arrived at the little bit of flat ground with its cattle-shed for shelter.

Those that had started earlier were there before us, and had got together much of the necessaries for a meal—such as tea and meat. The sentries were posted ; and joining a party sitting on some carts,

Morris, Waller, and myself, waited the hour of midnight before resuming our march.

It was a dreadful Bedlam in that shed, but somewhat more redolent of tobacco; all talked and smoked at once. Among the lucky few that still possessed a drop of anything stronger than tea or water, something better was to be had. To sleep was impossible. Here perhaps among a crowd of talking tea-drinkers (only because they preferred that to the alternative—plain water) would one take to harmony in whistling. Then would come snatches of song, and doubts—spoken loudly—that the enemy would bolt. As the report of a spy came in, the Babel would for a moment cease, and for five minutes the unexcited man hoped to be allowed to sleep. But the thought was vain; and few were sorry when the brave fellow commanding gave the orders for us to be once more on the road.

Over the rushing, foaming river, as it burst across the road, the horses were carefully led; candles and lanterns being held near the larger stones above the boiling waters, so that they might avoid an accident by falling over them. Then on we went again, and as the gilded clouds told of approaching morning, we waited at the mouth of the pass to gain intelligence of the enemy. They were before us, and to drive them out was necessary. Here, right and left, as we proceeded, were burnt houses, and ere long we hoped to let the burners

know that such deeds could not be committed with impunity. As the cavalry moved off to the right, so as to cut off the retreat in that direction, the village came in sight, and round it men in swarms. "Drive them out!" was the order, and with a cheer the village was stormed. They stood but for a moment, and, after an ill-delivered volley, retreated in haste, only to be followed and cut to pieces by the volunteer and irregular cavalry. The thing was over in an hour, and with it more than two hundred of the enemy bit the dust. We had but two killed and a few wounded, and these, with the exception of an officer doing duty with the cavalry, all sword cuts.

The affair was utter rubbish, so far as a fight was concerned, or as to any generalship being shown. Each seemed to me to go fighting on his own account, and nobody appeared to know very well to what he belonged. After the first momentary struggle was over, the enemy took to the trees; and in return for the few passing shots fired by him at the cavalry in pursuit, were potted by the Goorkhas like crows. One or two, being like rats in a corner, fought desperately, otherwise the resistance was of the slightest; and utterly despicable when one considers how much the fanatics had been boasting for days before.

As the heat was intense down in that forest, and as there were no more brutes left to kill, we deter-

mined on returning with the news of our victory to the Lake; but not, however, until some tea and chupatties had been found for all. So getting our wounded away, and leaving some rascally native officials in charge of the place, we, towards sunset, were once again comfortably settled at Nynee Tal.

The little affair served as a two days' wonder, and as a good lesson to the pets in the bazaar, who now saw how perfectly incapable their murdering brethren were to stand against disciplined troops. The officer commanding the expedition got thanked, as also did the timber-collector that commanded the levies, and some seven officers, *captains* in the *army*, *doing duty* with the levies *under* him.

For some days after this, both Morris and myself were laid up with fever, and unable to share the joy with which the fall of Delhi was received. It was a brave deed, that taking of Delhi; and he that formed that army, and forced it to remain until the city was once more our own, deserved some grand mark of a nation's gratitude.

Again did the curs below block up the pass, and talk largely of deeds to be done. Once more were the lank jaws of the Mahomedan pets in the bazaar quivering with delight at the chance of their protectors being killed; and their dark eyes glistened as they heard that "Fuz-l Huc" meant now in earnest to seize the place, and root out for ever the cursed, daring infidels.

Again it was talk. A few cavalry came well on, then seeing the trap set for them, turned and fled, killing one unfortunate Goorkha, in return for the four or five of their party with lead let into them.

It was ever thus—they would seize the furthest outpost and fly on a mere report; but as the winter had now come on, and grain for the troops must be got in, it was resolved to occupy the entrance to the pass in force, and thus prevent any further annoyance.

Morris and myself, not being well, did not proceed with the troops, but remained for the benefit of snow and ice at the Lake. However, we improved little, if at all, and more than once I felt inclined to accept the medical certificate offered me, and return to England; more particularly, as after waiting two months, I had received no letter from the Bombay postmaster, and I became very anxious about those at home. Our first letters were, we heard, intercepted by the enemy, so I wrote again, and I calculated that, long ere this, a reply would have been received.

Winter was coming on; and as there was no chance of the route viâ the plains being open for the next six months, I was, with Morris, recommended to be quick, and decide upon whether I would yet go home, when a heavy fall of snow settled its impracticability, and, until spring, we were prisoners.

Feeling better, I had determined on riding down to our outworks, and join them in an expected scrimmage with some of the enemy, when calling in at the post-office on my way, I was handed a large packet of letters. There was one, its edge in black so deep that it was conspicuous above all others; and, turning its direction towards me, great was my joy to see the handwriting of Amy. There were others from Ella, Jane, and even Henry: cramming all into my pocket, I put off my war expedition for another day, and returned to Stael's, the better to devour their contents at my leisure.

Amy had to announce to me the death of her father. He had only for about a week before his death complained of not feeling very well, but nothing more, when suddenly he was seized with fainting fits, from which he passed into eternity. He but twice mentioned my name, and each time with praise; and his last words to Amy, after begging her to forgive him for the misery his obstinacy had entailed, were to desire her to write to me, and be my wife.

Poor girl! she evidently was much cut up at her father's death, and had quite forgiven him for any annoyance he had caused. The estate was to be sold, and the money it would fetch was disposed of in various ways by will. Amy was herself left twenty thousand pounds; but this I did not know from her letter, which entered into money matters

very slightly. It was full of loving wishes towards me, and hopes that I would no longer remain in India. Poor girl! she little thought that, a few days after the date of her letter, the one addressed was flying for his life, before hordes of blood-thirsty miscreants; and that, ere it could be received, he whom she loved better than all the world beside would most probably be a mangled corpse. Her letter, so full of love and hope, made me dread the reaction; and I feared that the news of the destruction at Alumpoor would be more than her brain could bear. Oh! how I longed to be with her, and let her hear that we were never again to part: but it was ordered otherwise, and I had but the poor consolation of knowing that she would hear of my safety from none but myself. Her answer to my letter, written on our first reaching Nynee Tal, was now anxiously wished for by me, for in that alone depended my future happiness.

Ella, Jane, and their mother each wrote portions of a letter; and, after a lament over the generally disturbed appearance of India, and the disaffection showing itself in some regiments, went on to relate the circumstances of Mr. Jones' death. Through them I learned how his money had been willed; and they entered more at length into an account of the sorrow he latterly showed for so opposing his daughter's wishes. Even in his will, leaving Amy the uncontrolled power over twenty thousand

pounds, he alluded to the sorrow he had caused, and hoped that she would now fulfil her engagement. The will was made but a few days before his death. There was no other particular news from St. Helens. Henry had written, and still liked the North, and had never asked for a farthing.

Henry's letter to myself was laconic, saying, "he did not think me a bad fellow after all." He was pleased with Upper Canada, and to show he had not quite forgotten me, sent out some few little bright feathers for wings for salmon-flies.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HAVING read and re-read my letters, I went out to collect any news I could regarding the enemy's movements at the foot of the hills, and had hardly gone further than the library for that purpose, when I was told that rather a severe action might be expected, as not only were the enemy entrenched and numerous, having many well-disciplined troops with them, including artillerymen, which we had so kindly given, but that they had also a fair number of guns.

There was no time to be lost, and returning to Morris (who after getting his mother's letters had been attacked with the old fever and gone to bed), I told him what I had heard. Morris was too unwell to start that evening, so we waited until early next morning, and by midday were with the force preparing for action. Next day the enemy were attacked by us, and after an obstinate resistance driven from their position, leaving their guns, ammunition, camp, and all in our hands. We had

rather a large amount of killed and wounded; among the latter was myself, a bullet having penetrated the flesh of the blade-bone. I was not aware of it at the time, nor, indeed, until long after the action was over, when on lifting up my arm to point out something, I found the doing so give me excruciating pain. On taking off my coat, the bloody shirt proved the cause, and I was not long before I was under the doctor's hands. The ball was easily extracted, and next day, with Morris, I returned to the Lake.

I was not in a good state to be wounded, even ever so slightly; and a bullet-wound can never at any time be otherwise than somewhat severe and dangerous. The bruised muscles and flesh will ache, and slough away, and this must cause fever and restlessness to the invalid. After the first week, when feeling began again to be restored to the injured parts, the aching pain was intense, and once again did those dreadful long days and nights return, as spent in my tent when I lost my arm. Poor Morris in another room was also ill; and now he, like myself, waited but for a slight improvement in our healths to risk the road across the snow, and be once again on the way to England.

Nothing could exceed the kindness of Stael to us both. For hours would he, when spared from duty, come and sit by my bedside, and with his happy, cheerful voice prevent my thinking on the pain I

was enduring. Often did he foment my wound himself, and laugh good-temperedly, when, pettish with pain and want of rest, I would tax him with being clumsy. Morris took all the doctor gave him, and between the bouts of fever came and talked of home and happiness.

Thus passed three weeks—and now the wound was easier. Morris was better, and well enough to go to the library and elsewhere. "Here's something for you," said Morris, one morning, after the usual trip to the post-office; and, as he tossed some letters on the bed, walked quickly away.

I saw immediately they were English, and with trembling hand tore open the envelope of one written by her I so dearly loved. Oh, the relief after reading it! Amy was well; and this was the answer to my long letter written from this place months before. Two letters had been written between, but they were both sent before she was aware of the outbreak of my regiment, and must have been stolen by the enemy, or, not improbably, by some native postmaster.

The dear girl was evidently unable to describe the state she was in on hearing of the outbreak, although she had never given up hope, as she heard there were officers and ladies known to be concealed in Oude; but this hope became less and less, as each succeeding mail brought the names of those known either to have escaped or be in concealment,

and mine did not appear. She was staying at St. Helens, and in my family had found a fellow-feeling for her grief, for in the affianced husband that she sorrowed for, the family wept for a son and brother. Great was her sorrow, and she felt at times angry for having obeyed a father's unjust order too strictly. The melancholy that was at St. Helens was elsewhere: all England wept for her sons and daughters ruthlessly destroyed; and in yielding to her individual grief, Amy felt she was doing wrong. No letters for months, and then the deep crape showed that the family had given up the lost one for ever. Cold and wet was the early winter's day that saw the village postman walk up that avenue and deliver once again Indian letters, in hand-writing known so well. Could it be? Yes! It was his; and the fond sisters rushed with their prize to the inmost recesses of their rooms.

After finishing Amy's twenty-page epistle, and fully determining that, snow or no snow, so soon as able, I would take advantage of a medical certificate to England, I opened those from the girls and my mother. Their joy was indescribable, and they added their wishes for my return to those of Amy. Ella's was as usual, the first part all feeling, the last all impudence; and after expressing pages of pity for the privations I had suffered, there were pages of hopes that when I did come home I would

be cleaner, and jokes about cannibalism, lizard-eating, and frogs. These last, she said, were to be had in endless varieties on the banks of the river near St. Helens; and although lizards were not procurable, she hoped that would not prevent my returning home, for she could assure me there were quantities of grasshoppers and nasty crawling things to suit the most fastidious taste.

Pleased with my letters, my thoughts returned to Morris, who had so suddenly left my room; so calling his name, I found him lying on the bed in the next. He had left me directly he saw who the letters were from; his good, kind heart telling him that at their perusal, or even receipt, the presence of a second person could not be desirable.

"Good news, I hope, my boy," said Morris, after telling me why he had disappeared so quickly.

"Very good, thank you. And you? Have you no letters?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "one from my dear mother. The shock has been awful to her, but she is better. Dear old Elliot went down to see her, to try and break the news quietly to her, but she had somehow heard it before him, and was frantic. He stopped a week with her, and made her at length see that she had no right to dispute God's will. The hearing again after all from me has been nearly equally fatal; but this time it was more for the curer of the body, than for him of souls; and beyond a very

few lines written by herself, as the old doctor would not allow her to write more, the letter is written by the old housekeeper, whose diction and spelling, though none of the best, and rather hard in places to exactly find out her meaning, express good wishes and blessings. Towards the end of her production, she launches forth into serious complaints at my having so long promised to come home, and never doing so, and tells me almost plainly that it serves me right for remaining so long among the blacks, as she calls the natives."

"Good old soul," I said; "I remember her a great hand at specifics for ills—and won't you have to take them? I took no end from her. I vote, directly I get the use of my arm, and this nasty hole heals up, that we walk off across these hills. The fighting is nearly over; and I really think you and I are as much entitled to a medical certificate as any one. Bother any more fighting for me—I always manage to come in for it, and am beginning to feel like an old man of a hundred; besides, Amy is all right, and waiting for your humble servant."

"Then, of course, as the future dutiful husband, you must obey and go; and, as we have scraped through so many horrors together, we may as well enjoy the future good in each other's society. I really think the doctor is right when he says that I shall never shake off this fever until I go home; and as for yourself, I never saw such a miserable

wretch in my life—ought to have at least a certificate for forty years to recover. Why, the small boys will hurrah when they see you—'My eye!' they'll say, 'here's a feller! how yeller! How's your liver?' " replied Morris, laughing at me.

" You are facetious; but you don't look anything extraordinarily beautiful yourself, with your hair cut like a convict's, and your face burnt red and yellow. When we meet in Regent-street, I hope you will have the sense to cut me. Well, that's enough about ourselves; and now I shall try and get well as quickly as possible, and we will start. Poor Stumps! I shall be sorry to leave him," I said.

" So shall I," returned Morris, " for he has put up with all we have undergone cheerfully. He is as kind-hearted a fellow as ever was, and, I believe, as brave as a lion. He is in perfect health; all the better for being obliged to be abstemious up here, and will be sure to get an appointment."

" What is he doing now—I have not seen him for a week, when he was last up from the Brokery?" I asked.

" A sort of general duty, and always longing to go in at those brutes, who still hover round our entrenchments. He told me, when I rode down there the other day, that he infinitely preferred grilled lizards and boiled frogs to the doubtful pork and tough strong goat, which are all one can get here.

He said that he would catch some frogs and eat them; but he is afraid of lookers-on, who might think him a sort of cannibal."

"Poor Stumps!" I said; "his stomach always was a bit of a god, and the short commons up here must be trying. I, for one, don't care how soon we quit it. I am tired of that pork, and don't believe it is any better than it should be; but, bother this wound, it keeps me always in one position, and my side is so sore."

"Well, I shall not do you any good by talking, so here are some extras: more troops are coming you see, and the people in England are at last beginning to think that it is a rebellion and not a mutiny." Thus saying, and depositing a quantity of newspapers on my bed, he walked off down the hill.

After a few days I was well enough to leave my bed; and from that time improved rapidly. Indeed, I was not so much plagued now by my wound as in my general health, which was completely broken. Daily attacks of ague and fever, with pains in my liver and head, tended to keep me an invalid; and I only waited for strength to be able tow alk a few miles, before I turned my back on the beautiful and romantic scenery around.

As the days became a little warmer, and the snow melted from the hills about, I thought I was well enough to try: and so bidding Stael good-bye, and

thanking him a thousand times for his hospitality and kindness, Morris, myself, and Waller started for Almorah.

Waller was to leave us at Almorah, where we were to get fresh coolies or men to carry the baggage, and with these we were to try and get across to Mussouri. From that, by the old system of dooly or palanquin-dāk, to Lahore or Mooltan, and from thence to Bombay in river steamers.

The distance away from Nynee Tal to Bombay appeared enormous, and at first starting I almost despaired of ever getting there, certainly not before the weather again became painfully hot; and as I was in such a state that exposure to heat would produce dangerous consequences, it was a matter of moment to me that there should be as few delays on the road as possible. As Morris was nearly equally unwell, the same rule applied to him also; so he was not likely to counsel delay.

Before starting I had written home a full account of my state of health, and had told them to direct a reply to the post-office at Bombay; and after putting the letters in the post as we came down the hill, we went on our way to Almorah.

We had purchased a couple of good strong ponies, saddles and bridles, besides two very small hill-tents; and with these, and a fair amount of servants and coolies, looked slightly different to the

three poor blanket-covered men that had sought shelter there five months before. We had with us a dandy or litter, for fear that being tired we should be unable to walk; or the road being too narrow or rocky for ponies, we could not rest ourselves by riding them.

I felt rather fatigued before arriving at Ramghur, the first stage; and as I lay on the remarkably uncomfortable bed in that staging bungalow, feared that my strength was yet but too feeble. However, next morning I was better; and two days after the three of us entered the cantonments of Almorah, none the worse for the journey.

Here many told us of the almost impassable state of the road, and advised our waiting another month for the snows to melt; but both of us had too much at stake, not to most willingly put up with inconveniences. To us to arrive at home quickly was everything; first, because there were there all we wanted to see, and secondly, the hot season would not improbably kill us. There was a slight difficulty at getting coolies to go at such a season of the year; but all their objections were overcome by the civil officer in charge of the place, whose urbanity of manner, and general willingness to use his influence for the advantage of those around, require no panegyric from me; and two days after our arrival, and after quite a scene in bidding poor Waller good-bye, we set forth on our march.

One day was much like the other. We had intended going by the upper road, but after three marches, finding it much broken and in parts concealed by snow, we turned down into the valley, and passing through Lobah (*en passant*, the most desirable spot in the whole Himalayah for locating European troops, with miles of flat ground, a magnificent climate, and wood and water more than in abundance), we arrived at Seereenugger, a large city of great sanctity, and situated on the holy Ganges.

It was awfully grand that road—sometimes climbing in and out of the mountain's side. Two thousand feet below, in sheer perpendicular height, would rush that broad, deep, blue river, roaring and foaming in sheets, as its swift course was checked by huge mountains of rock which, ages back, had rolled from the summit of yon snow-clad height. Yes, that foaming river, to look down at which made the blood run cold, was the holy Ganges, and this at 1800 miles from the sea, but very few from its source. See the water-mark in the granite rock within two yards of me, and, with glass, trace the same on the opposite cliff. How many years think you this Ganges has seen in cutting this pathway for itself? Watch, man, for your short span of life, and mark well if even a line is left to show! Now would the road sink step by step until the roaring of the torrent, deafening you with its

constant noise, showed you to be nearly on a level. Through the dense foliage and long high grass were its waters seen rushing with impetuosity towards the sea.

It was bitterly cold at night; and at sunset, both for the advantage of heat, and to keep off tigers and other wild animals, with which the whole road is infested, we had large logs collected and caused them to blaze.

Crossing over the rope bridge at Seereenugger, we entered into the territories of a native Prince, and were entertained by him on arrival at his capital, "Keeree." The entertainment was not much—a little rice and rancid butter; but in times like these to receive the slightest civility from natives was uncommon.

It was bitterly cold during the remaining four marches into Landour; and but slow, slippery work. The snow lay in huge masses across the path, and was continually being added to by fresh falls. Beyond the mere time occupied in getting to the end of the day's march, this deep snow was no great inconvenience, as both Morris and myself had sufficiently recovered in health to allow of our walking eight or ten miles at a stretch; and I now felt, that if I could only get out of Bombay before the heat set in, I should be little the worse for the late wound and long exposure.

How different was Mussouri from what we had

known it a little more than a year before! more ladies probably than ever, but the bazaars are full of maimed men. Heroes from Delhi, Lucknow, and other parts; and the Jaupanees have turned soldiers, and drill, drill, going on all over the place. Then Deyrah Dhoon beautiful as ever; more drilling, and the gallows ornamenting the parade-ground.

Again a dāk is laid; and after every imaginable precaution against being surprised by any enemy on the road, revolvers and ourselves are off by sunset for Lahore.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

How changed were my thoughts now to what they had been at the end of the rainy season of 1856! Then there was no chance for probably years of my again seeing Amy; and I was on the way to house-building and pipe clay at Alumpoor. Now, how bright were my prospects! Of money for my own wants I had more than to spare; and Amy was waiting at the end of this long, long journey to give herself to me for ever. I could not be sorry for the death of Jones; and although I had quite forgiven him the misery he had caused, and had, even before I left England, began to dislike him less, still I could not quite drive out of mind that his obstinacy alone had exposed me to all these trials. As to the twenty thousand pounds, that sum was not much to him, and might have been given had he wished us to marry during his lifetime. I never had any very high opinion of a death-bed repentance; and considered that Jones never altered his

wish for us to be married, simply because being dead he very well could not; but as he might have done so had he recovered, I inwardly felt quite pleased that Death had held him tight and not allowed him the chance. For Amy to feel the loss of her father, however wrongly he might have behaved on one or two particular points, was natural enough; and I wrote such words of consolation to her, as I thought adapted to the purpose.

Thus passed the first stage—again the horrible old reeking torch and perspiring bearers; "buxis" asked for by every one within ten yards, and we start again, shake shake, for three or four more hours, and another stage is reached. The heat in the plains is commencing; already is very little covering required, and the usual thirst on arriving.

"Villars!" called out Morris, from his red-coloured, coffin-like dooly, "I am awfully hot and thirsty: what do you say to stopping for a quarter of an hour and having some brandy-and-water?"

"Why, they told us to push along, for the road is not quite safe."

"Pshaw!" said Morris! "that fellow at Seharanpore is not likely to let them come into his district without routing them out, or letting us know more than we were told by Dhoon officials. Besides, with our revolvers it is rather a hard case if we can't take a glass of grog in peace—so here goes;"

and ordering his men to stop, he mixed for us both a glass of brandy-and-water.

Tired and dusty we arrived by daybreak at Seharanpore, and after a good bathe and breakfast, felt little the worse for the fatigue over-night.

"Can you quite realize that we are really on the way home?" asked Morris.

"At times I can: then again it seems to me impossible that I, who but as if it was yesterday could scarcely find shelter from bad weather or the hungry tiger, am now travelling as comfortably as possible, and that homewards. But there is another thing, too, which is, that at the end of my journey, Amy is waiting to be my wife, and no old Jones still to bother. It seems wonderful how things have come about, and that, barring another bullet in me and this everlasting ague, I am not very much the worse."

"I wish I could say I was none the worse," replied the Major; "I feel as old as Methuselah, and precious stiff in the joints: I do not think I shall ever get that damp cave out of my bones, and shall be a martyr to my mother and Mrs. Hecketts the housekeeper. Ugh, the quantity of potions I shall have to take! Every morning it will be a case of Mrs. Hecketts at my bedside, with some awful-looking composition, saying, 'Now, my dear boy (she would call me her dear boy if I was a hundred), just drink this; it is something I have made for your rheumatiz,' and I shall never have any peace

until I take it. Now, you are going to be married; lucky fellow to get any girl to take such a scarecrow. But how fortunate you ought to think yourself in old Jones taking himself off just when he was wanted to do so."

"It was obliging of him," I replied, "and his future son-in-law quite feels the kindness. But if you are going to be a victim to an old housekeeper, you had better, when you feel too much bullied, come over and stop with us."

"Gently, my friend," said Morris, putting his finger on his nose, and looking demure; "you are precious fine now, and giving me instructions how to avoid Mrs. Hecketts and her nostrums, but wait till you are married, and then, after you have meekly and submissively asked your wife to permit an old friend to see you, send me the invitation."

"Oh! I shan't be henpecked. Besides, Amy is not the sort of girl that pecks," I said, laughing.

"Every fellow says this, and don't some of them get henpecked at last!—however, I will come and judge for myself; I am not going to take the description of a girl from a lover. Why, if she is not in his eyes all amiability, he has no business to think of marrying her, for he may rest assured that the little failings noticed before marriage will be big failings, painfully apparent afterwards."

"I wonder," I said, "Morris, with your ideas of *the goodness* of women, and the solemn duties en-

tailed by matrimony, that you have never married."

"Well, I was once very near it, and should, had it pleased God not to have ordained it contrary to my wishes, have been now a very old married man, for I was—rather an absurd thing to be, I'll allow—an engaged cadet. She was older than myself, for I was quite a boy, and loved with all the unselfishness of a boy's first love. Poor girl! I never saw her again: she caught a cold, which eventually brought on some disease, and then death. It was years before I recovered this; and though naturally somewhat boisterous in spirits, and fond of a hearty laugh, still this chief, and I may say only, grief, sobered me. I have now but one wish—to settle down quietly with my dear old mother, read to her, and delight her old eyes with drawings of all I have seen and gone through. I am sure the old lady thinks there never was such an artist, and that our dear old masters, Honourable John, have sadly neglected their interests in not paying me enormously only to go out and sketch temples for them."

"I can imagine how delighted she will be to see you," I said. "She spoke of little else but that she might do so some day, even whilst I was there. I vote we push along faster after to-day, and then we shall be home all the sooner."

This was agreed to, dinner eaten, pistols looked at, and long before sunset on again for Umballah.

Here the villains of mutineers had left their mark—ruined, blackened walls. Loodiana—Jullundhur—more burnt houses—Umritsur and Lahore. Look where one would at stations, and there were regiments of disarmed Sepoys, all waiting for their arms, or the opportunity to rise and murder the few officers forced to do duty with them. To me, fond as I had been of my regiment and the Sepoy in general as a soldier, the sight was sickening. Here, in every station, scattered over thousands of square miles, were hundreds of these Sepoys, the confederates of murderers, the brothers of murderers, the holders of the secret for the overthrow of the Government, which they had sworn to serve, and were *now serving*—the petted, pampered mutineers. Without arms, they required watching; and English soldiers and Seikhs, with artillery and cavalry, were kept from strengthening the hands of Sir Colin, so as to guard these miscreants. With them officers were forced to do duty. It was a sad sight and sore, to such as had suffered and seen so much of the mutiny as Morris and myself, to pass that camp at Mean Meer, and know that the would-be murderer before me, perhaps a havildar or native officer, was still being paid in full by the good Government that he had disgraced, and that the scowling, tall, well-made grenadier, who saluted me as I passed, was drawing his nine rupees a-month until he should be strong *enough* to destroy the payer.

"Why not collect all the brutes into some sort of entrenchment—say, put their whole camp in a line of tents under the guns of the fort of Umritsur—have one regiment of Europeans inside, and some four thousand Seikhs with a few light guns out. Let these fellows watch every disarmed Pandy, all of whom are to be collected here, and give them only convicts' subsistence allowance. They could never get away. The Seikhs would take care of that; and on the slightest commotion in their camp, the guns, loaded with grape, should dose them. I would hold no terms with any of them. They have been untrue to their salt in their mere silence regarding what was going on. They knew well enough that there was a plot against a Government that they had sworn to serve, and did not reveal it, but would have joined in it had not John the Magnificent been too quick for them; and hang me if I would go on feeding the useless, nasty, murderous brutes," said Morris, quite excited, as we passed the mutineer camp on our way to Mooltan.

"I fancy the Government would be very much obliged to any one giving them some plan to get rid of these fellows; and nothing would be much more pleasing for the Pandies here to try and make a run for it. These Seikhs would soon account for them. I think the Government are, as ever, too kind; and think that in discharging them they are breaking faith," I replied.

"Would you send them to China?" asked Morris, doubtfully.

"No; I approve of your plan of collecting them all under the guns at Umritsur, and giving them each two annas a-day, which would more than feed them. When the war is over I would turn them off, each man to return to his home, first choosing where that shall be, and there be watched by police, but very different police from civilian police. I cannot approve of employing a man in whom your faith has once wavered; and if he is only to act as a soldier in China or at Otaheiti, where are white men enough to compel him to do so, the sooner you discharge that man from your service the better. If ever we re-employ these men, I don't care what the regiments are, whether the 59th or the 4th—two said to be really loyal—from that day we have an increase to our armed enemies. In the event of a war on the frontier, say with Russia—or use the regiments abroad, and say with France—these regiments are to be bought; and with one withering volley into the poor officers doing duty with them, would the villains go over to the enemy. They never can love us again; they feel that they have been checkmated, and revenge will be an heirloom in the regiment. To return the checkmate, and perhaps cause us a defeat, would amply repay them for years of anxiety; and I really think that in their *being* rearmed I see the first crack in the arch of *our* strength in India."

"How would you watch them then at their homes afterwards, Mr. Counsellor?" asked Morris, leaning on his arm at the bottom of our conveyance.

"Why, I have never thought of any plan regarding these men until this moment," I replied. "But you know I have always been against the army of Burkundaz and Chuprassies kept up by every civil officer for the use of the district and courts. Now, instead of these locals, I would have irregular regiments of Christians, Mheters, Seikhs, and all, commanded by tolerably young men, not under captain's rank at any time, with an interpreter and adjutant combined, as also another officer, second in command. If ever there should be a surplus of officers, let one or two be sent to do duty, and thus learn the peculiar duties of these regiments. The districts being parcelled out, should have so many men from one of these regiments in different parts; the head-quarters, with the Commandant and Adjutant, remaining at the chief civil station, and the necessary orderlies for the courts being sent from the regiment. These orderlies I would have on weekly duty, their numbers to be defined, and to do all the work Chuprassies do now."

"Nurse the babies and pull the punkahs, eh?" asked Morris.

"No," I continued, "I mean what Chuprassies are supposed to do, such as convey the magistrate's orders to thanahs, &c. My police at the thanah

would be under the orders of the senior non-commissioned officer, and to obey orders given to him by the thanadar; making a weekly, or if he thought it necessary, a daily report to the Adjutant at head-quarters of all orders given. All non-commissioned officers to write well, and no European officer to be appointed to command, nor an Adjutant, nor, indeed, let any be connected with one of these police battalions, who is not a good scholar in the native languages. I don't care what the wonderful praiser of himself from Bombay, who chose such a nice time to hold up our defects for general observation, may say about knowledge of the languages not being necessary. It is so; for I defy any Adjutant doing his duty if he does not understand what is said to him; or any Commandant dealing out even justice if he is unable to hear and understand the evidence given before him on both sides."

"The man must be an egotistical idiot who says there is no necessity for not knowing the languages in India. The more one knows of all of them the better," said Morris. "I have ever been averse to any officer receiving charge of a company until he fully understands what the men say to him; and would do my best to make the men look up to their Captains, or officers in charge of companies, as their best friends, and the commanding officer as the main-spring that kept the clock going. Now, if the men find that their officers do not understand what

they say, they will either not complain at all and sulk, or else take all their little grievances to those that do. Pshaw! to command irregulars, one ought to be almost a native, with every virtue found in the European."

All this conversation was carried on as we travelled in one of the carts used for bringing troops up from Mooltan. The vehicle was a queer-looking, strong-ribbed thing, perched high upon two wheels of great diameter. To keep off wind, sun, and rain, was a large canopy composed of grass, string, and bamboos. Putting the bedding from our doolies inside this, and balancing its weight upon the bullocks' backs with the little luggage we possessed, we constituted this our home for the five days between Lahore and Mooltan.

The vehicle was not the most comfortable contrivance I had ever seen. The shaking, from the want of springs, over that dreadful road, was awful. The dust, which lay on the road twelve inches deep, was driven by the motion of the wheels, and a little wind, upwards, covering us with whiteness; and the sun shot through fiercely. At night it was bitterly cold, as the wind rattled across those sandy wastes, and penetrated every cranny in the cart. However, we were very glad to get it, and passed our time in heat, dust, and cold, with a daily wash at the staging bungalows, very happily, and in due time arrived at Mooltan.

CHAPTER XXXV

We were detained here some days on account of there being no steamer to take us down the Indus to Kurrachee; and having seen the sandy cantonment and more disarmed Pandies, and written long letters home, we were not sorry on the fourth day to be summoned on board.

Amy had seen in the papers that I was wounded: I foolishly had not written home to tell any one, and she had given way to dreadful fears. Fortunately, Davis had seen a letter sent from some officer likewise engaged, and he had mentioned my wound as being merely trifling. This had served to somewhat pacify her; and so she had written once more to beg I would immediately come home, and put myself out of the way of any more of these nasty bullets and cut-throat natives. As soon after writing this letter she must have received mine, telling her I was going to do so, and another soon after saying that I had started, I did not apologize for the delay in obeying her orders, but satisfied

myself by showing I was still *en route*, and looking forward with no little joy to the time when I should see her standing on Southampton Pier, for I wished her to be there to greet me.

There were several passengers on board, all bound for home. Many poor young girls whose deep black and weeds said the war had made them widows. It was sad to hear afterwards their histories. How the poor care-worn fragile thing before me, over whose young head even yet nineteen summers had not passed, was a widow of more than nine months standing. Before her fell her proud young soldier-husband; and she, after weeks of toil and insult, barefooted and half naked, escaped to tell the tale. With her in the same small cabin was perhaps another, child-like in make, yet old in face, and mother of that unpleasant babe. Poor thing! for days did she carry that child on her blistered back; and, after dangers unheard of, is now returning home. See you black group arranging their little luggage; they are also refugees, and have seen a husband die. Ay, and one of them, that bright fair-haired little thing, has once placed that curly-headed handsome boy now playing at her feet behind her, and, with pistol in one hand and spear in the other, kept more than one miscreant from reaching the landing-place on the nursery stairs. Yet she is here; saved with her husband and child. Brave man and woman! Of such is England proud!

How few of the sickly, thin-looking men around are there unwounded! See yon fine-looking fellow, his arm shattered before Lucknow, how ill he looks! Here is another coming—a brave soldier, and modest, fine boy; he fought for a standard and took it, but is crippled for life. There, helped across the deck, is an old gray-haired Colonel—undoubted his bravery, as his many wounds can tell; but still they have not yet taught him to think before he speaks, and not annoy those near him by using oaths. There is little joy on board; all have lost too much to see a happy future; and, as the steamer swings into the river, many sigh to leave the land that holds in it all they love on earth.

Now steamed we on day after day, stopping at night to receive on board the wood collected and stacked on the bank for the steamer's use. After days of winding among sand-banks, and more than once striking with a shake against the bottom, the river widened, and in the greater number of channels open for a vessel to work through, there was less chance of being detained for days aground. Now the hold is open, and the broad expanse of water tastes brackish. It is the sea—long-wished-for sight to many an aching heart—and the rolling, ugly, dirty-looking vessel, tugging at its anchor there, is to carry us on to Kurrachee. Dreadful is the scene on board of her: to us gentlemen, sleeping always on deck, the change is not so particularly

disagreeable; but those poor ladies,—is no difference to be made for them? must they as soon as the dreadful greasy dinner is removed sprawl about for the night,—privates' wives, ayas, and all promiscuously?—and the fast-sickening children, where do they go?

Now the moon rises; and as the last poor widow unwillingly leaves the deck for her somewhat more odorous corner below, I turn into my bedding placed alongside of Morris, who, sick and feverish, had long since retired.

By midday we drop anchor at Kurrachee, and there, at Treacher's hotel, wait for a chance of getting on to Bombay. There is something very English-looking in Kurrachee: the nice clean little cottage-shops with an English name, as saddler or joiner, painted over the door, reminded me of many a similar abode in a far less-distracted land. The cantonments were clean and airy, with always a cool breeze blowing. This served to revive poor Morris, who for some days past had been very unwell; the exposure on the deck of the river steamer all day to the intense heat of the sun, and at night to the biting cold and fog, had increased his fever; and neither he nor I were any the better for our journey.

Whilst waiting for some wretched little steamer to return from Bombay, we took a view of the harbour, its ships, and its lions. Among the chief of these last, were some seven or eight hundred men,

both native officers and Sepoys, proceeding as convicts to the Andaman Islands. They were the first batch, and excited no small interest. The fellows had been marched down under charge of a Seikh regiment from the Punjaub, and were now huddled up in cages on board "The Roman Emperor." There was plenty of room for them between decks, and they had every chance of being treated kindly. It was a sad sight, looking on some of those old gray-headed men, many fifty years in the service, and to think that they should so forget all past kindnesses, the years of intercourse and intimacy they had had with all their officers, and suddenly turn to murder them. What dreadfully cruel hearts they must have, that would murder their friends, and their innocent wives and children, because they were in the pay of a Government, ever good and kind to its servants, more particularly to Sepoys, but which they all at once had taken to suspect! I left the ship more in sorrow than in anger with them for having been so easily misled.

The steamer came hissing in that afternoon, and by the next, crowded together in the most wonderful manner possible, we beat away for Bombay, arriving there all safe and sound, but decidedly dirtier and worse for the three days on board. Ugh! the cockroaches on board that vessel: they impregnated everything. Things that did not taste or smell of machinery tallow and coal-dust made up for it by

the flavour of cockroaches. How they ran from hole to hole, and down each rope on deck! The very killing them, however, served for something to do, and kept many a poor weary invalid from brooding over his diseased condition.

I shall not stop to describe Bombay and its Parsee inhabitants. Suffice it to say that the town is a very fine one; the harbour splendid, and protected by numerous guns, without any one to fire them, or troops to man the defences; and that the inhabitants of this Bombay are without exception the most impertinent, uncourteous, and I believe as disloyal a lot, as any to be found in India.

As to the Sepoys, I should be sorry to trust them any more than their brethren in Bengal; and was glad to see, as I passed thus hastily through the Presidency, that there was a sufficiency of European troops to put down any attempt they might, assisted by their rascally independent friends from the large towns, wish to make at rebellion.

Morris was well enough to accompany me from office to office, so as to obtain the necessary certificates, and to pass the medical Board. There was some difficulty about pay, as certain rules in force in one Presidency are not used in another: security is required from the Government of Bombay from Bengal officers, and as this security must be either a merchant in Bombay or a Bombay officer, such is not easily obtained. I was good enough to offer

them Morris, and he kindly retaliated by disposing of Captain Villars, as security; but we, though officers of the same Government, were not of Bombay, and as such not considered safe. It was rather an awkward dilemma, thus being called upon for security, just as we were on the point of sailing; and having as the only alternative to go without being paid any arrears of pay, passage-money, or one farthing. It was not settled without much difficulty, and through the disinterested kindness of the Peninsular and Oriental Company.

I had found letters at the post-office waiting my arrival. Amy was in raptures at the thoughts of seeing me, and filled her many pages with expressions of what she would do when the time arrived. She was still staying at St. Helens; and though wishing to go up to her aunt's in town, as she feared she was making too long a visit, none of the family would let her go: my mother especially now looked upon her as another daughter, and would hardly let her leave her sight. With Jane and Ella she was everything, and before them was not allowed to talk of leaving at all. "The Elms" was sold, and the proceeds, after paying her the 20,000*l.*, were disposed of accordingly as willed; and as she had now no house of her own, I thought, with my sisters, that the best place for her was at my mother's; and so wrote and told her before I left: my letter going by *Mar*seilles thus preceding me by some days.

My mother wrote at some length, telling me the preparations that were being made for my return, and of the joy she had in making them. Then she straggled away in her letter to lamentations over my again getting wounded, recent fires, and the war in India; winding up with the names of all the ladies having babies in the country, and all the young women engaged to be married.

Jane was, as usual, most affectionate and quiet; her pages filled with well-turned sentences regarding gratitude for having been permitted to escape, and fears that the constant anxiety and exposure had undermined my constitution. Jane's was a right loving nature, and although she did not show her affection so much as her younger sister, still she loved as well, and was as unselfish and truthful.

Ella was impudent as usual, evidently beside herself with joy at the thoughts of again seeing me, and having Amy for her sister. Her letter was full of plans for the future, which varied from our settling down in a portion of the house at St. Helens, to residing in some wonderfully romantic, woodbine-covered cottage ornée near, in and out of which she and her sister were to be always flitting. Then came remarks about making presentable a certain cripple, all jaundice and broken limbs, who was to be fetched with care from the Southampton Docks, and when well physicked, polished up, and fit to appear, was to be made a

victim of at the parish church. Henry was going on well, and had written not only an affectionate, but very proper letter to his mother; in which he said, "No one could feel more than I do for the suffering Philip has undergone, and none were more pleased to hear of his escape." He also said he was most pleased to hear of my engagement with Miss Jones, and hoped all happiness might be the result.

The letters were certainly satisfactory; and, after reading and answering them, I had nothing to do but wait for the steamer to sail. The long-wanted day came at last; and, by midnight, some one hundred and eighty passengers were very uncomfortable, very much crowded, and, in many instances, very sick, on the broad and open sea.

Added to the old passengers down the Indus and from Kurrachee there were many others: some officers of the Bombay service going home sick, some transfers to second battalions at home, or on foreign stations; but the greater part were wounded officers and widows, who had come down at an earlier period from up-country. It was the same sad tale with almost all the ladies on board. Their husbands either murdered, after they had been sent to the hills for safety, or else killed as the war continued. The yellow sickly faces, with arms in slings, and using crutches, told why the men were *going* home, and how campaigning in this deadly

clime told upon the constitution. Now in little groups would those one-legged or one-armed men collect, and, under the awning, talk of the home they nearly saw. Day after day was the ship's run counted, and the amount in miles deducted from those yet undone. Now all talked of loving friends and faces, those to be found waiting on Southampton Pier. Now against the bright blue sky rises, black and volcanic-looking, the pointed rocks of Aden; and as the heat becomes intense, and the white houses on the shore distinct, we cast anchor for the day.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

NEITHER Morris nor myself were well enough to go up to cantonments, or in any way to *do* Aden; so we contented ourselves with going on shore, and being done by the Parsee hotel-keeper instead. I had been there twice before, as had Morris; and we could not help observing the very different behaviour and bearing of natives of every description. Formerly, from hotelkeeper to boatman, though cheated, the Englishman obtained civility: now it was the cheating unaccompanied by civility; and I could not help observing that the war in India had affected us even thus far.

"Did you ever see anything like the impertinence of the Parsees here, and the natives generally?" asked Morris, as we got once more on board the steamer.

"Yes," I replied, "at Bombay. These Parsee fellows ought to know better; they are better educated, and supposed to be less bigoted. From us *they* have never received anything but civility; and

through our fostering aid they have been allowed to attain the wealth and power that they now possess; and yet none swagger more over us, or care less for the curse that has fallen on the country. They little think, that if we were turned out of the country to-morrow the conquerors would not for a moment tolerate their religion, and that all their wealth would be forfeited. As for the other natives, they take their cue from them, and swagger as well as the best of them. The Arabs about here were always a queer lot; and, as all around is a Mussulman country, I fancy they have their sympathies with the Mahomedans in India, who are the fomentors of all that has occurred."

"But what can we do? I really think the Government are placed in a very difficult position, and in trying to please everybody, have managed to do so to nobody. Now look at Bombay, Poonah, and no end of other large native towns where the natives have it all their own way, go swaggering in carriages whilst the white man walks, have every civil appointment, even to magistracies, and yet outbreaks are daily expected in these towns, and the inhabitants are discontented. The people at home growl if native talent is not used, and does not get full swing; and when it is, it is only used to our destruction and to the misery of all around," said Morris.

"I don't know," I replied, "whether you would

agree with me, and I expect the people at home would howl; but I do not think the natives are in any way to be trusted in responsible situations. I have seen a good deal of them, and as an interpreter know their language well. I have often narrowly watched them, and I must say that seldom, if ever, have I known a native do a thing from a perfectly disinterested motive, or to be free from outer influences. In the Asiatic nature there is something that reminds you of his tiger—apparently tame, but naturally vindictive and cruel. They want that independence, that fearlessness of consequences, that determination to do their duty, which are so frequently seen in the well-educated Englishman. Were they, as a general rule, honest, warm-hearted, and above deceit and taking bribes, I would let them enter the lists for public honours and offices against the white man; but when I see that power to them is used merely as an engine for crushing their neighbour, not for the general good —that they fear more what man says than what God thinks, and have no other god than wealth—I, as a man, wishing well to India and the millions there, do object to the natives having power in it."

"You will never have them understand the wickedness of taking bribes or of abusing power until they are converted, and that will not be, I *fear,* for many years to come," said Morris,

wrapping his cloak around him, for it felt almost chilly as we now stood out for Bab-el-Mandeb.

"I know that," I replied; "and until they are really Christians, or have some more proper tenets than those taught them by Zoroaster, by Mahomed, or in the Institutes of Ménu, I would not put them in any situation of trust. I hate cant, and to hear men always talking of religion; but a man must have a better motive for being honest than the fear of detection, and a better reason for dispensing equal justice than the fear of being removed from office. It requires to be imbibed in infancy that feeling, that for every evil act a time of reckoning must come; and that the talent intrusted to you is neither to be buried nor misused. The old Latins said, you know, 'Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum'—when the natives understand that, they should have the power of dispensing justice, and not till then. It appears hard to me that whole districts and generations of men are to be made unhappy because a popular cry forces the Government to put into places of trust men a little raised above their fellows in learning and law. I defy any man who studies the Koran, as all these Mahomedan lawyers and deputy magistrates do, and must do, to like us infidels, to begin with, and to do justice, to end with. In the Koran, in one verse he is told of the beauties of honesty and peace; in the next verse he is told that it is only necessary to give justice to

a true believer, and that the infidel is of no consequence. Indeed, to kill all such is meritorious in the sight of God. To deceive, to lie, to rob, or in any way to injure a disbeliever in Mahomed is a good work for a true Mussulman, according to the Koran, and yet you would place a man learned in this rascally book to rule over thousands of infidels. Can a man like that—a bigot, or, not improbably, a believer in nothing—be above bribery? Will anything but fear of detection keep that fellow from being a very tyrant, and base to the backbone? Now, then, for the more moral law founded by Zoroaster. What say you to the man being placed in power who believes that in keeping up sacred fire there is great reward? and that in looking at a woman's face. other than in his own family, the viewer deserves to die? and, finally, would you place in power the gloomy reader of laws which tell him that a Brahmin can do no harm, that there is nothing so much to be feared as a Brahmin's curse, and that any one who punishes a Brahmin, or in any way gives annoyance to a twice-born, is sure to be punished hereafter? Would a man like this, think you, adjudicate faithfully between a chumar (leather preparer) and a Brahmin? Do you think he would punish a man equally for killing a horse as a cow? or do you not think the man killing the sacred cow would be judged more by the value the animal *has* in the Vedas than in the village? I would

infinitely rather see hundreds of young fellows fresh out from home, and hardly knowing one word of the language, guessing at what was said, and doing justice to the best of their power, than I would see natives as magistrates or heads of police."

"Surely," said Morris, "you think a knowledge of the language necessary in a civilian?"

"Of course I do, and as a general rule civilians are very good linguists; but they are far too few, and cannot, however much they may wish it, do justice over the immense districts under their charge. I would give them European subordinates; every district should be subdivided, and into such sized divisions that it could be well watched by the European magistrates. No youngster should of course have any power until he had passed; and the very wish inherent in a gentleman to do justice would induce him to try his best. Appeal I would allow in all cases: I think this plan would please the natives much more than having any judges of their own creed and colour. I know they despise them, and say openly that they take bribes. These youngsters from inspection tours, shooting excursions, and one thing or another, would soon know every one in their little districts, and when the natives saw that cases were decided on their merits, and no underhand influence allowed, they would cease litigating, and be more satisfied and happy."

"I have often thought," said Morris, "that the

natives themselves, that is, the hewers of wood and drawers of water, do not like having their fellow-natives employed; and I have been frequently asked as Major commanding the regiment, or Captain commanding my company, to write for a petitioner to the collector or magistrate, as the only chance the man had of getting justice done him, for in his district the man in power was a native, and as a consequence venal in the extreme. It is sad to think upon, that at the end of one hundred years we have not improved their morals; but one thing, is that for the first seventy-five years our own morals were none of the best, and for the rest we have been so busy in settling new countries that we have had little time to spare for the more delicate duties of our stewardship. I do believe our greatly improved moral character has tended to make the natives suspicious; and now-a-days our more openly showing in whom we trust has made some of the fools think we meant to force them to trust in our Saviour also."

"I wish they would," I replied, preparing my bedding on the deck for the night. "I wish they would, and until they do they should not be placed on an equality with those that do. It is not only our duty but our interest to employ native Christians, and they should be for the future incorporated largely both in the civil and military services. Moreover English should be taught in all Govern-

ment schools, and the Bible. No promotions in any of the services to be made without the candidate understands English, and the more onerous or responsible the post may be, so would I have a more complete knowledge of our language. Remember, in none of their books are there a dozen lines likely to elevate the ideas or improve the man; and instead of translating from a fine language into a poor one, I would by degrees win those possessors of the poor language to see its faults, and find refuge in the beauty, strength, and health-giving literature of dear old Britain."

"Well," said Morris, "I dare say as soon as this dreadful war is over and order restored, everything will be upon a better system. Already I see the Punjaub system is extended to Delhi, and well will it be for Bengal when it gets that far. There are, however, other considerations; what I dread is the power of the new native army that we are raising. These Seikhs have learnt their power, they know that next to the European they are our best soldiers, and as regards pluck, strength, and mere fighting powers are very little inferior to their white brother. These Seikhs never fought for us because they loved us, but because they hated the Sepoy, and had visions of the loot of Delhi before their eyes. Now that looting is over they will not so easily quiet down, and do the hard work for the Englishman. I think we have knocked caste on the

head; but by employing so many of one nation and kindred we shall be falling into the old mess. I wish, without any reference to his caste, every likely-looking man was enlisted for a soldier, and some check put upon the indiscriminate levying of men in every part of India. There is not a civil district nor hardly a large town but what some officer, either civil or military, is raising troops in it. Raised thus there can be no regular system, so that with the change of Commandant the regiment falls to pieces or may mutiny. I see no help for it. We cannot now very well reduce our new native army. My plan would be to use them a long way from their homes, and make them take colonial duties, such as Ceylon, the Cape, Mauritius, &c. &c. They would then see that England possesses other lands than India; and would on their return be able to tell what they know to their stay-at-home brethren. When we have railroads, and steam all through the Punjaub and to Bombay, we could very easily give these half-mutinous armies a change. Three years of Peshawur or other parts of the Punjaub would do many a Bombay native regiment good, and the admixture of Seikhs be beneficial."

"I trust," I said, "that if the whole thing is made over to the Queen, they will not keep the Presidencies so distinct. It must be a great expense, and causes foolish jealousy. Let the same

rate of pay be everywhere, and then what matters it whether the troops serving in the same station are all Bombay or all Bengal. But there, we have had enough of India and castle-building. I trust, whatever the new Government may be, they will not be ashamed of their Christianity; not truckle to the natives and their absurd prejudices; and last, though not least, be led by the enthusiasm of Exeter Hall, and by the advice of many, who mean well, but are ignorant of the people for whom they would legislate, to force Christianity down their throats. No laws that ever were made, and bringing our Christian religion prominently forward, will make the natives think any the better of us, or the religion we profess. Nothing but a steady determination to do justice, to crush evil, reward good, give no countenance to idolatry of any sort, and lead a consistent, God-fearing life, will ever make the nations around see the beauties of our religion; and this must be the work of time."

"Good night," said Morris; "I shall dream of an Indian Utopia, with natives all saying their prayers, and not cutting our throats; and the great Captain Villars a sort of general referee and shepherd."

"Something like Holloway, with his blessings for the million—ten pills (but not without the ointment), and you are cured in an instant. Good night," and, turning over on the deck, I was asleep immediately.

It was something like heat up that Red Sea; and by the time we arrived at Suez neither Morris nor myself felt any the better for having been subjected to it. However, the cool air of the desert, and the prospect of soon being at home, kept us up. It was dreary work at Cairo waiting for the steamer to come into Alexandria, for both of us were too ill to see the sights. Not that I lost much by that, for I had seen them all years before.

Scream goes the railway-whistle, and we rattle away in the most comfortable of carriages for Alexandria. Now come off from the shore those boats loaded with passengers; and as we sit down to dinner in the nice clean saloon, attended upon by English waiters, and hear English spoken all round, we feel a slight jarring motion, and discover that we are off full speed for Southampton.

There are almost all the same passengers as we had the other side. Some few of the stronger and more impatient ones are gone viâ Trieste and Marseilles, armed with passports viséd by every Consul in Egypt, and elsewhere besides. The deck of the nice, comfortable, dry old tub is like the sister vessel on the Indian side, soon covered with crutches, bedding, and easy chairs, and the passengers, forming into little groups, make plans for arriving in England.

Malta is reached, and after letters received and read, cripples and all rush on shore, partly to avoid the horrors of coaling, and partly to see the

sights. These done, at dark away we stream for Gibraltar.

I found several letters waiting my arrival at Malta; among others one from Amy and another from St. Helens. Amy told me she intended meeting me on the pier at Southampton, and was to be accompanied by Ella, Jane remaining at St. Helens, partly to take care of her mother, and also to finish the preparations for my arrival. What all these were I could not very well discover; even the letters written by the girls themselves only gave me to suppose that my room was again being made ready; and so, after consideration, I came to the conclusion that the vast preparations existed in Ella's brain only, and that I should find three years had made but a very slight change.

Morris was to meet his mother there too, who was now well enough to come so far; and pleased was that dear good man with the prospect before him.

It seemed a long time between Malta and Gibraltar, yet it was accomplished at last; and then the horrid coaling being over, we started full power for Southampton. What fears that bad weather in the Bay might detain us! that something might happen to the machinery, and we be forced to sail, or a thousand other causes for making the voyage longer! but none occurred, and in the usual time from leaving the Rock did the steady old vessel pass the Needles, and steam up Southampton Water.

Nearer and nearer we came to the docks, and

now, as we steamed slowly in between the huge vessels, could the dear happy faces of England's daughters be made out. Now, as we came nearly broadside on to the pier, would one of the many waiting on that shore dressed in deep mourning wave a handkerchief, and the waver be recognized by some heavily-whiskered, one-legged man on board as his mother. "That's my sister, I am sure," would a fair young widow say, as she pointed to some girl not unlike herself, dressed in sable garb, on shore. It was a heart-rending sight—those poor widows, and once strong men, now earnestly gazing with tear-brimming eyes on the groups on shore; and great indeed was the rush when a narrow bridge allowed of the long-looked-for meeting.

I had with Morris been sitting on the paddle-box gazing most anxiously. From among the groups of ladies dressed in black, I had hoped to have seen Amy and Ella; and now as the ship was moored to the wharf I felt my heart sink within me, as neither of the faces I longed for made their appearance. From at first supposing that Amy was ill, and unable to come, I at length was led to think there might have been some mistake in the preparations they had made for coming, and hence their non-appearance. Morris and myself had long since packed, leaving our trunks to find their way to the custom-house; and, as long before the ship was *moored* he had discovered Mrs. Morris, we resolved *to quit* for Radley's together.

"Come along," said Morris to me, as he stepped across the narrow planks, and was immediately hugged and half smothered with kisses by his good, kind mother.

Whilst this scene was going on, I had turned a little to the right, and was in the act of going away, calling out to Morris that I would be at Radley's, when from the crowd pushed a fine tall girl, and in her question, "Is that you, Philip?" I recognized my sister Ella.

"Oh Ella, dear!" I said, giving her my arm, and dragging her off towards Radley's; "where is Amy? she promised to meet me, and I am so disappointed. I have been straining my eyes for you both."

"I did not know you, dearest," said Ella, sobbing; "you are so altered, and look so ill. When I heard your voice, I saw it was you. But Amy thought to meet you on the pier before so many people might be too much for both of you, so she asked me to go alone, and bring you to Radley's, where we arrived last night."

"You dear Ella! how is Amy?" I asked, feeling that it was better, perhaps, after all, for our first meeting to be in private.

"Oh, very well; and like us all overjoyed to get you back again; and like us all pretty determined that you don't go away again. But here we are;" and we entered the hall of the house where Amy was.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ELLA left me to go to her room; and as I opened the sitting-room door, there stood before me the tall, handsome Amy. One long sob, with an exclamation, "Thank God, that he has allowed you to return!" and the true-hearted, loving woman sunk upon my bosom. I was too weak to support Amy; and placing her on the sofa, remained for some time in silence gazing on that fair forehead, and the pearl-drops as they clustered on her long eyelashes.

"Oh, how ill you look, my own dearest one!" said Amy, in answer to my numerous questions regarding herself. "Oh! why did I ever consent to your returning to India! It has killed you, my Philip, my dearest, bravest soldier?"

"No, no, darling," I replied, trying to soothe her, and kissing her bloodless lips; "I have been *very* ill, but am better. The voyage, too, has upset *me*. Now, with you, all will go well, and I shall

be soon as strong as ever. We will go down to St. Helens, and try the country air. But, dearest Amy, never mind about me; I can assure you I am not going to die," I said, seeing she still looked doubtful; "I am going to live for you, darling. The pleasure of this meeting amply recompenses for all the misery I have undergone. Oh Amy, dear one! how often, when dying with hunger and shaking with fever, have I imagined this! Hope never quite deserted me; and the thought that I, one day, might see you again preserved my brain from reeling. Good Amy, you have never forgotten me, and I know you have had sometimes much to bear!"

"Nothing, my future husband," said the handsome girl at my side, "but what any girl would submit to for the one she loves. Little, my poor sick darling, did I imagine, when I wept for you as only those can weep who have lost all that binds them to earth, that your existence was prolonged by such fearful trials. Oh, it was sad, sad work as mail after mail came, and no letter from you! My heart was breaking. Then news came of the loss of Oudh, and I heard no more; among the thousands swept away I mourned for you as one; and with an aching, widowed heart, I joined your dear home in lamentations for the lost one."

"It however you see, dearest, turned out all right; and here I am," I said.

"Yes, Philip, dear one, I can never feel sufficiently grateful to Him that disposes all things for the best, that he should in mercy have heard my prayers. God has been good indeed to us, and, darling one, never forget to give Him the praise," said Amy, looking more of heaven than of earth as she spoke.

"I do not, dearest Amy; even should I have ever wished to forget, my best friend and companion in misery, Morris, would not have allowed me. Morris has come home with me and is now somewhere with his mother. He is coming here presently, and then you must make his acquaintance."

"Any friend of yours is my friend, dearest, you know; and I, as well as all your family are not a little anxious to make this Major Morris's acquaintance. Your letters have always been full of his praises; and as for Ella she is quite in love with him."

Ella now entered the room, and after receiving numerous assurances from me that I was not very ill, and not going to die on the instant, she relaxed from her anxiety about my health, and joined in the numerous questions about our escape, Morris, Waller, and wounds. These all settled satisfactorily, we gave over love-making, and paid such attention to a hot lunch and porter as only people in love do; that is, left very little for the waiter to take away.

Morris and Mrs Morris called in the evening,

and before five minutes we all talked with each other as if an intimacy had existed from childhood. Mrs. Morris and Amy became great friends, and talked quite knowingly of the means to be used towards restoring the two sickly men to health; Ella, the Major, and myself joining in occasionally with a joke at Mrs. Heckett's compositions for the diseased. Ella was wild with high spirits, and seemed almost to frighten old Mrs. Morris with the noise she made.

"I don't know," she said to the Major, "what Mrs. Heckett may do to you, but I'll make Philip take such doses every morning."

"That's right, Miss Villars," said the Major, "he has been boasting all the way home of having his own way, and laughing at me because I am to be physicked by Mrs. Hecketts. Give it him well. The worst kind of black doses every morning."

"I wouldn't give too many black doses," said Mrs. Morris, innocently.

"Won't I though!" laughed Ella. "Here Amy, Major Morris says Philip has boasted all the way home that he is going to do just as he likes, not going to obey any orders, and laughs because Major Morris will have to take physic; do you allow this?"

"Nonsense, Ella," said Amy, laughing. "We will have Dr. Miles to look at Philip, and go by what he says."

"Thank you, Amy," I said, "but we won't have old Miles nor any other son of Rhubarb. I shall get well enough without."

"But my dear Captain Villars," said Mrs. Morris, seriously, whilst Ella drew back a little to conceal the smile on her lips, "you look very yellow, and ill; and if I were your mother and sisters, with Miss Jones also, I would insist on your seeing the doctor; and I do hope you will be made to do as he tells you. Henry, my son, is very good; he takes all they give him."

"Barring what he throws out of the window when Mrs. Hecketts is not looking," said Morris, *sotto voce*. Then speaking louder, he added, "Very true, mother. Nothing like physic for him; for all Captain Villars may say, I do not think he will get well without. Isn't he dreadfully yellow, all bile I should say?"

"Bother you, Morris," I said; "what on earth have you to do with my taking physic? go and take your own; and when you have had enough, come down to us."

After a little more talking, and much advice from Mrs. Morris to both Ella and Amy, on how to extract the yellow from bilious people, mother and son rose to go, but not before both had agreed, before long, to come and visit us at St. Helens.

"Well, Ella," I said, after they had gone, "*what* do you think of the Major?"

"I might ask and wonder what he thinks of me," she replied. "I like him very much. He appears to have no end of fun under that quiet manner; but the old lady, I am sure, thinks me half mad. I could not help laughing at the quiet way she said that her son took all his physic like a good boy, and wanted you to do the same."

"You behaved very badly, Ella," said Amy, "and left me to do decorum all the time. I am sure she looks upon her son as a boy still, and on Mr. Philip there, as a very naughty boy, supported in his wickedness by a noisy sister."

"Well, I won't take any," I said; "and as I said before, am going to get well by looking at Amy. How old would you think the Major?" I asked.

"He looks so ill, there is no exactly saying," replied Amy. "I suppose about forty."

"No," I said, "he is not thirty-eight, and very young in ideas on some things. He has been lucky in his promotion; but this mutiny, and the exposure, make him look older. For my own part, I feel as if in this year I had lived fifty; and having almost always the past floating before my eyes, makes me look more ill and serious than I otherwise should do."

"Trying to get out of your black doses," said Ella. "Wait until we get you to St. Helens, and then we will judge whether it is bile, or remi-

niscences of the past, and you shall be treated accordingly."

"We must get some colour into your cheeks, dear Philip," said Amy, "and make you stouter. You look like a—"

"Scarecrow," said Ella, filling up the blank.

"No—I did not say so, or mean it," said Amy, blushing, and hoping I did not think she did.

"Oh, yes she did," said Ella. "Of course, until married, it would not do to call people names."

"For shame, Ella," said Amy, "I really did not. I would never laugh at any one, much more at poor Philip for being so thin."

"I know you wouldn't, dearest Amy," said Ella, kissing her, and fearful that she had hurt her feelings; "but the simile seemed to me so good, I could not help saying it for you."

"Scarecrow is going over to see his things through the Custom-house," I said, not much liking the turn conversation was taking, "and then, when I come back we will have dinner." Thus saying, I took my hat, and was soon busy among bales and boxes.

There was no great difficulty. As I had ever found them, the authorities were most civil and obliging; and in this instance, where so much of the luggage belonged to people already more or less ruined, the duty imposed was merely nominal.

Some few shawls and other things, that I had brought as presents from the Punjaub, were passed without comment, and after the payment of a few shillings, I followed my trunks to the hotel.

Next day we started, viâ Basingstoke, for Gloucester, and by the evening were once more in the old hall of St. Helens.

My mother and Jane had sent the carriage to the station to meet us, and were waiting in front of the old house as we drove up.

It was a right kind meeting, and none seemed more pleased than my mother at the recovery of her son. She, and also Jane, were much shocked at my sickly appearance. I had to answer as many questions as ever regarding my health ; and it was not until they had seen me eat a very good dinner, and take the home-brewed kindly, that they would believe that I was not close on dissolution.

It was a fine May evening, and after dinner we had chairs brought outside, and sat under the copper beech-tree. There, until the distant chimes rung out midnight, we continued talking of all that had occurred; and as we closed the day with prayer, Jane, who officiated for her mother, added a few lines of thankfulness for their prayers for my safe return being heard and answered.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE climate of St. Helens soon restored me to health, and ere I had been one month at home the yellow had left my cheeks. With Amy for a companion the hours flew fast away; and as we sat together on the Wind Cliff, and sketched the noble scene below, or reclined in the deep shade far removed from the heat of the scorching sun, we forgot the past in the happiness of the present. Those were happy hours, often passed by us in conversation more serious. Jane and Ella were our frequent companions, and happy indeed were they in the wife I had chosen. Amy was now no child; she had seen something of life and much of trial. Ever quiet and retiring, the past had formed her character; and having since her father's death been entirely thrown upon my family, she had taken to looking upon my mother as her own, and on Jane and Ella as indeed sisters. With my mother Amy was everything, and to me there was no small satisfaction in observing how well my future wife was loved by the family with which she would soon be connected.

Morris had been written to frequently; and my mother had herself sent an invitation to mother and *son to* come down and spend some time with us. *This* they at last did, and not a little pleased was I

to see my companion of the cave an inmate of my mother's house. He and Jane were not long in finding out each other's worth; and in our daily scrambles about the sights in the neighbourhood, his hand was ever ready to assist her over difficulties. Ella amused herself by joking at every one, "doing Gooseberry," as she termed walking with us out into the country.

A very few days sufficed for Major Morris to be intimate with the whole family; and great were the jokes at his expense and my own made by the boisterous Ella. He rather liked her doing this, and would frequently by his reply urge her on to being almost personal. Mrs. Morris did not quite understand the allusions to Mrs. Heckett and her dosing propensities, and had more than once rather sharply reproved Miss Ella for her way of talking.

"But, Major Morris," said Ella, one night, whilst we were all sitting in the deep bay-window, "I am sure you prefer frogs to these trout; and although Mrs. Heckett may have slightly improved your taste, still I do not think she has quite corrected your love for frogs and lizards yet."

"Miss Ella Villars, Henry does not eat frogs now," said Mrs. Morris, with dignity.

"Only because he is ashamed to do so," said the incorrigible Ella. "I was offering to get him some. Philip will support him."

"Will you, Villars?" said Morris, urging her on: "then let's have a feast."

"Really, Henry," said Mrs. Morris, "I hope you

won't. I wish, Miss Villars, you would not put such notions into his head."

"Miss Villars," returned Ella, looking innocent, "would never think of such a thing. Would you, Jane?" Then added Ella, shaking her head most seriously, "I am afraid, Mrs. Morris, these two gentlemen, with a Mr. Stumps, became so enamoured of broiled frogs and lizards in that cave that they cannot now give over eating them."

"For shame, Ella!" said Jane and Amy together.

"Your spirits go beyond your prudence," added Mrs. Morris, quietly.

"That's shut you up, I think," said I.

"Amy," replied Ella; "here is Philip talking slang. Give it to him."

"How shall I?" asked Amy.

"You know," she replied. "Make him go and sit near Jane, and not have a kiss for a fortnight." This caused a blush to rise on the cheeks both of Amy and Jane, more particularly the latter, who was at the moment very busy listening to the Major's somewhat earnest discourse on beggars and begging.

Fearing the consequences of our united anger, Miss Ella thought discretion the better part of valour, and made a rush for the door.

I had been very busy lately with visits to Chepstow, having had much to do with those horrible things called settlements, for the day fixed for my marriage fast approached. It was arranged that Morris and old Davis should be my best men, whilst my sisters officiated as bridesmaids for Amy. Pre-

sents came in pretty plentifully; not among the least handsome of which was that put into Amy's hand by old Davis the day before. It was a bank note for 1000*l.*!

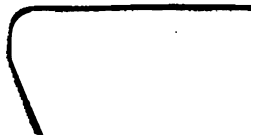
Henry wrote, for him, quite a long letter, wishing me every happiness, and sent some beautiful specimens of Indian handicraft to his future sister-in-law. At length all was settled and papers signed; and about eleven o'clock, on a bright day in July, we drove to the parish church, and there quietly and unseen, except by such rustics as the news of our wedding had drawn together, was Amy made my wife.

We returned to breakfast—many a beautiful bouquet of dog-roses, hastily picked from the hedge, being thrown into our carriage as we drove up the shady lane. Many was the kind wish cried out for our future welfare; and with hearts brimming with hopes and happiness we joined the merry party at breakfast.

After the usual toasts and good wishes, we ordered the carriage; and as fast as five shillings could induce postboys to drive, did our carriage roll along towards the Lakes. Here, at Ullswater, from our beautiful cottage, reflecting itself in the water below, do I conclude this history of my life. Here, in perfect happiness with her for whom I underwent so much, and who for my sake bore patiently a father's anger, and was constant to the last, do I conclude this narrative.

We have several visits to pay: among the first is one to Elliot, who lives but a short distance away

at Windermere; from that we go to the parsonage in Staffordshire, and shall return to St. Helens early in autumn. From that place we have heard frequently; and from the wording of Ella's last letter I fancy there is something between Jane and my companion in the cave. Certainly neither Major Morris nor his mother left when they intended, for now they should be with Elliot at Windermere; but instead "will stay at St. Helens a short time longer." There is something in that, as Ella says; and with her I should not be surprised if soon we know more about it.

Waller has written a long letter from Nynee Tal. He is still there, feeling it very hot at the Brokery, watching rebels. He has been out against them several times, but never anything particularly satisfactory has been the result. He is in excellent health, and looking forward very anxiously for Sir Colin Campbell to come to their relief, as he says "even tough goat is getting very expensive, tea, scarce, beer unpurchaseable, and my longing for frogs daily increasing." Under these circumstances, with nothing to do, Captain Waller—for I see he has obtained his promotion—is anxious to go on active service, and help heart and hand to punish the miscreants that treated all so cruelly.

THE END.